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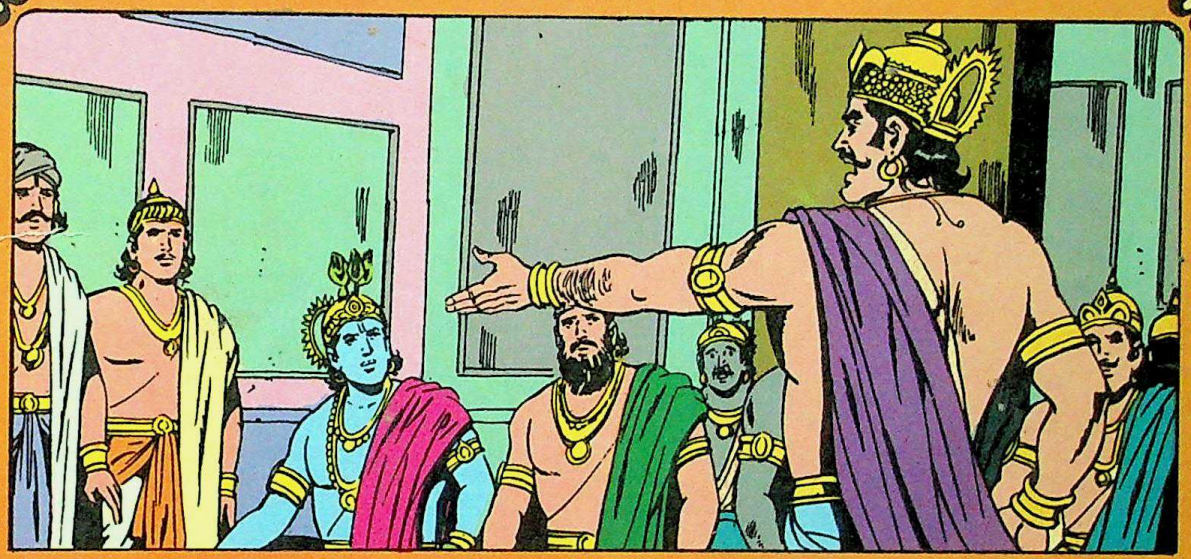
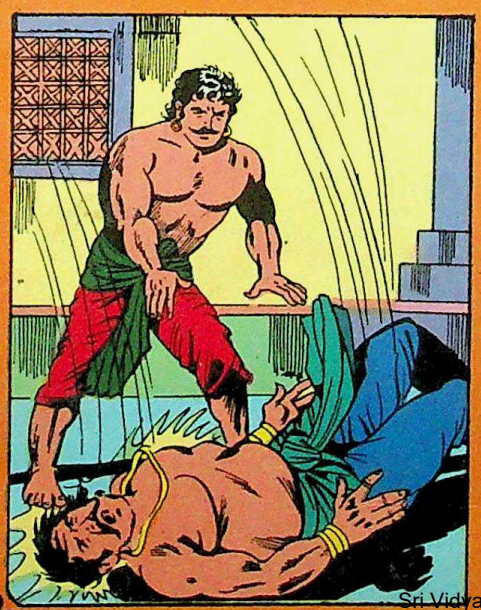
AMAR CHITRA KATHA

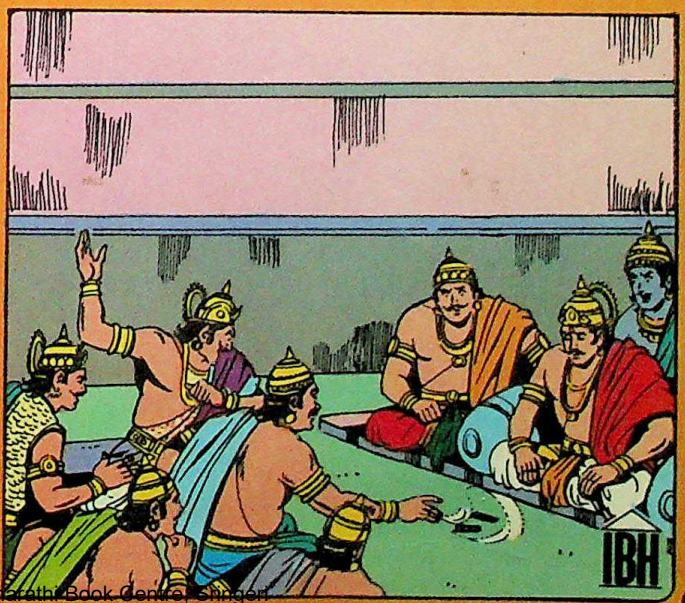
MAHABHARATA

THE COSTLY GAME OF DICE

- THE PANDAVAS CONQUER THE WORLD
- YUDHISHTHIRA'S RAJASOOYA YAJNA
- INDRAPRASTHA LOST







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THE COSTLY GAME OF DICE

Veda Vyasa's epic on the Bharata race was first recited in public by his disciple Vaishampayana at the behest of the ageless seer Vyasa himself.

The recital took place in the august presence of King Janamejaya, a great-grandson of Vyasa, and the many learned sages assembled for Janamejaya's Sarpa Satra (a 12-year-long snake sacrifice).

Our earlier volumes described the training of the Pandavas and Kauravas, the Pandavas' escape from the burning house of shellac, their marriage to Draupadi and their subsequent return to Hastinapura. Also related were the events leading to Arjuna's 12-year exile, his marriages and the construction of a magnificent hall for Yudhishthira at Indraprastha.

The next three volumes of our rendering of the Mahabharata describe the slaying of Jarasandha by Bheema, the subjugation of the other kings by the Pandavas and the Rajasooya Yajna performed by Yudhishthira.

The narration includes the decisive game of dice in which the Pandavas lost their kingdom and were compelled to live in the forest for thirteen years.

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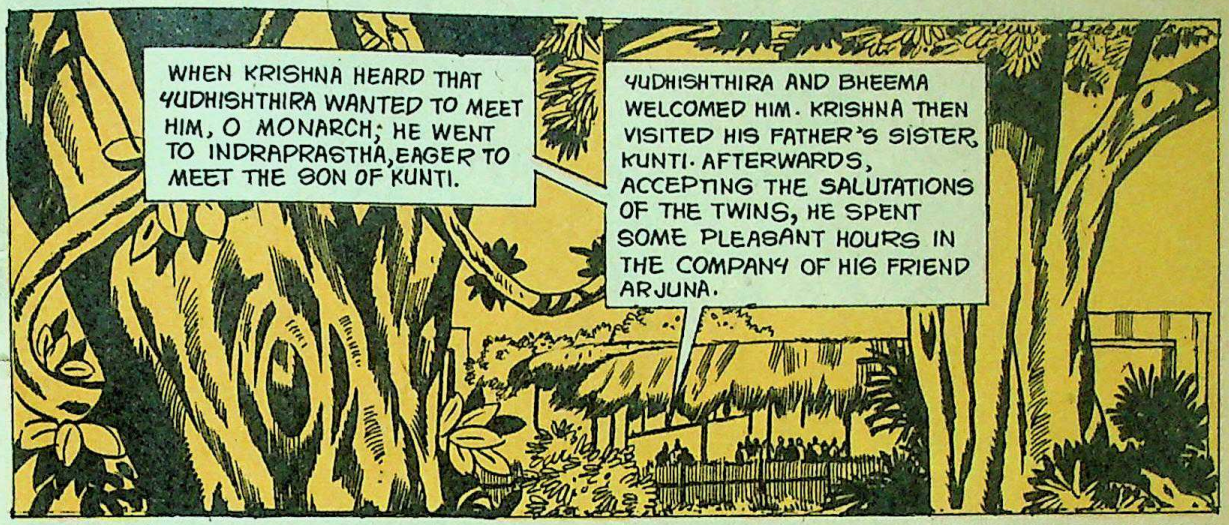
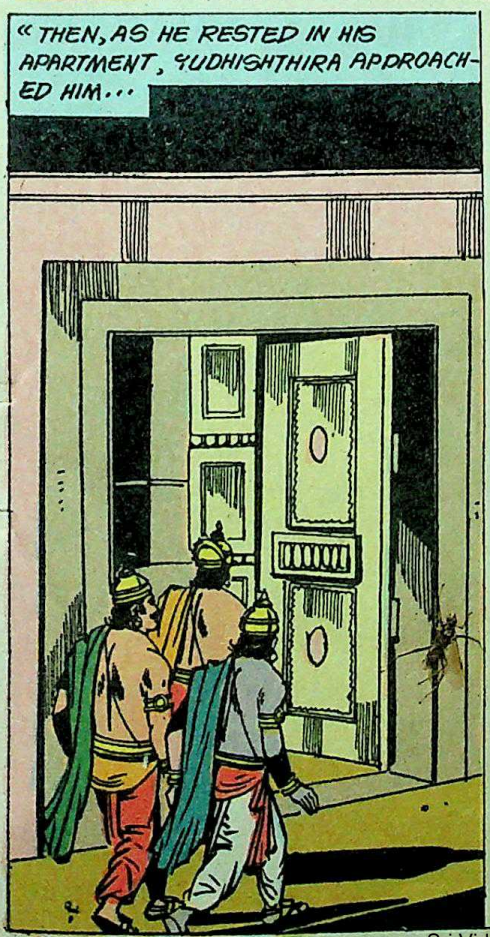
Mahabharata – 16

THE PANDAVAS CONQUER THE WORLD





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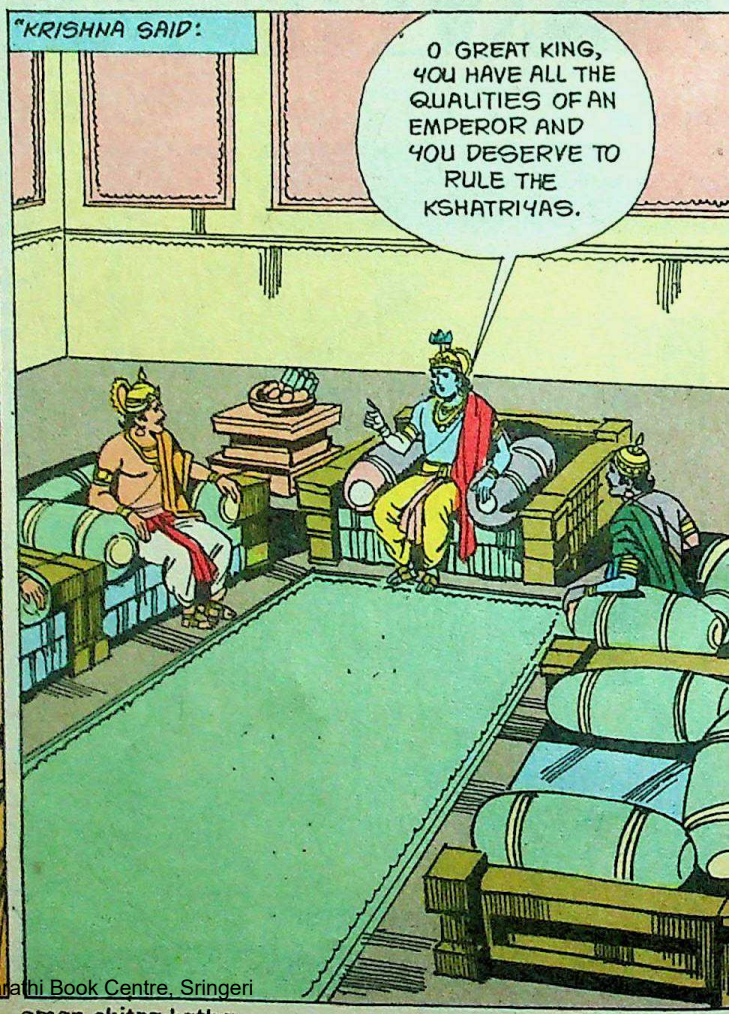

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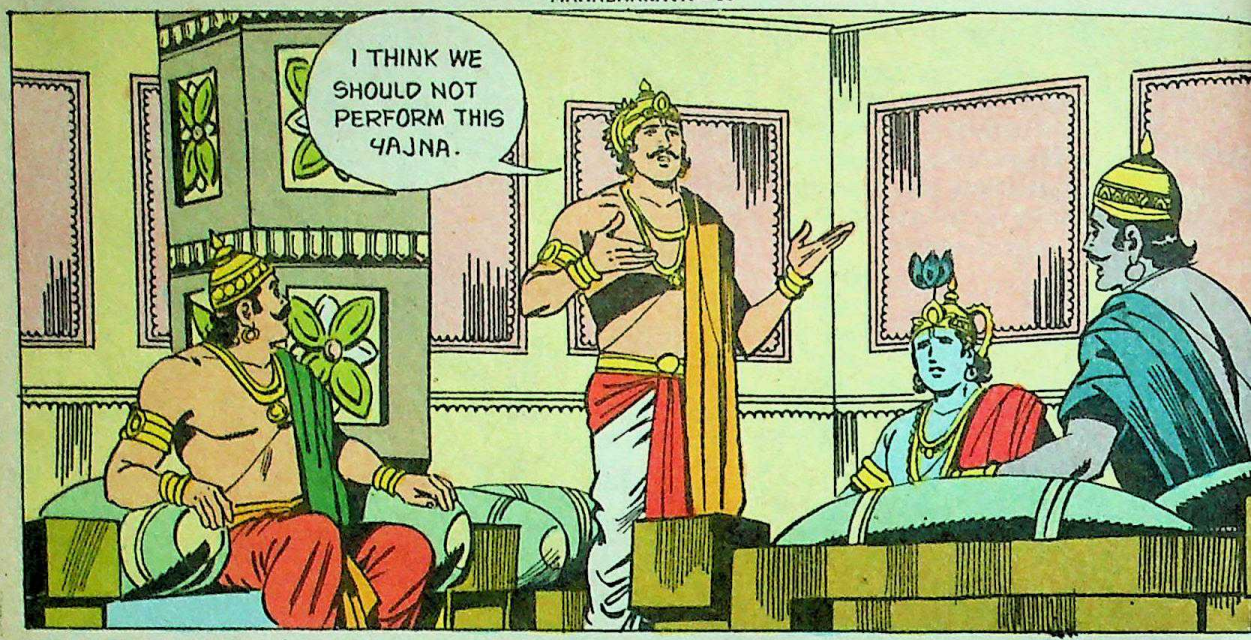

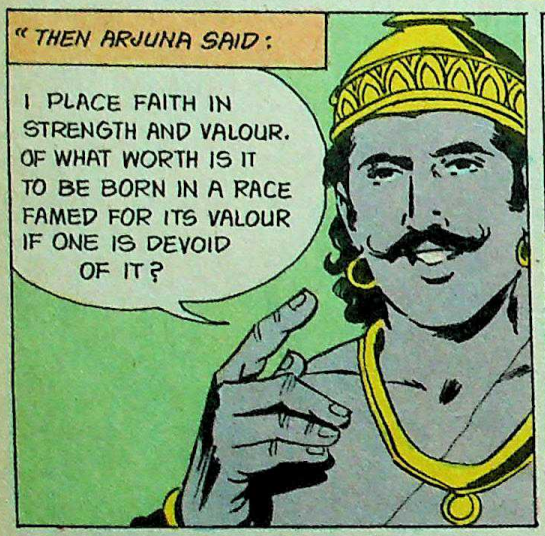

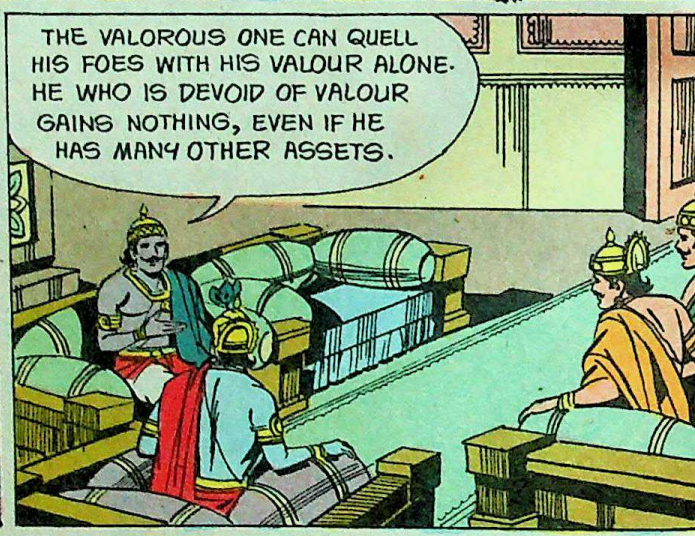

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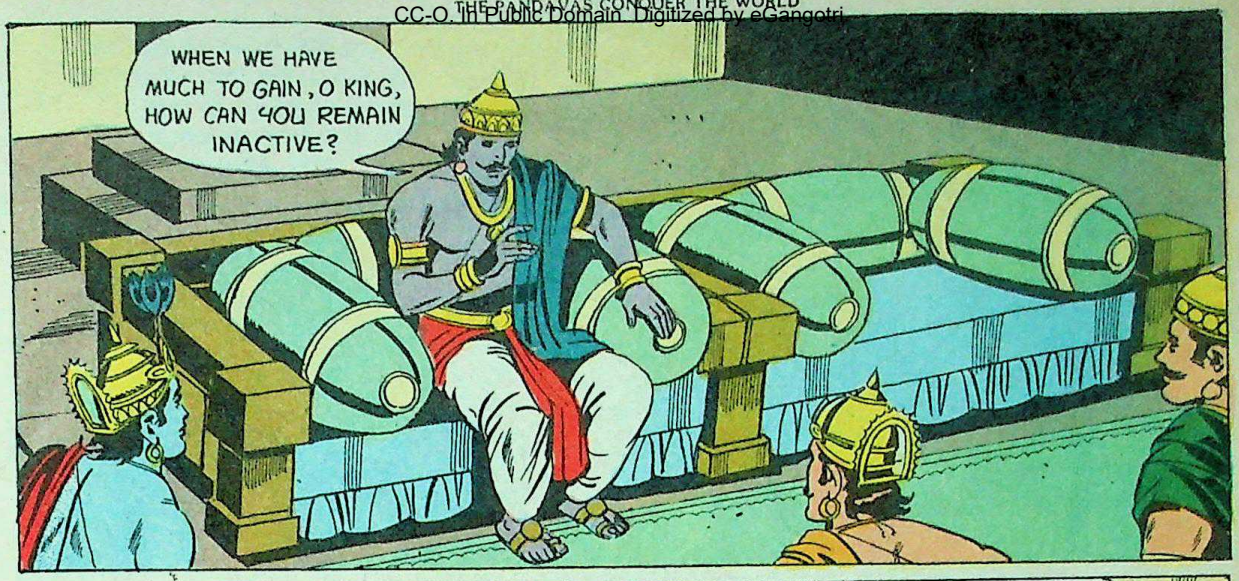

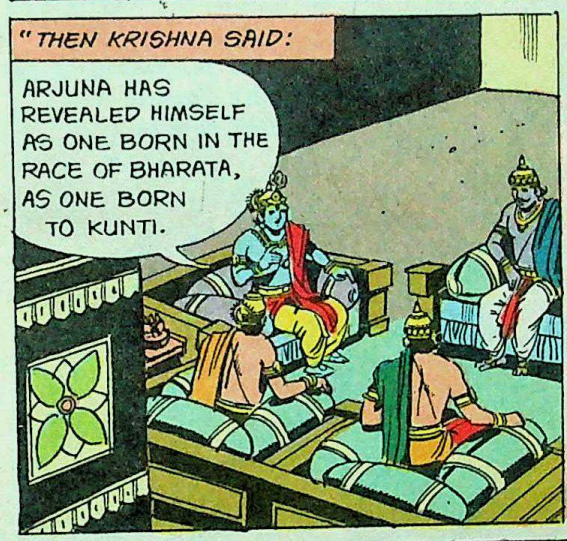

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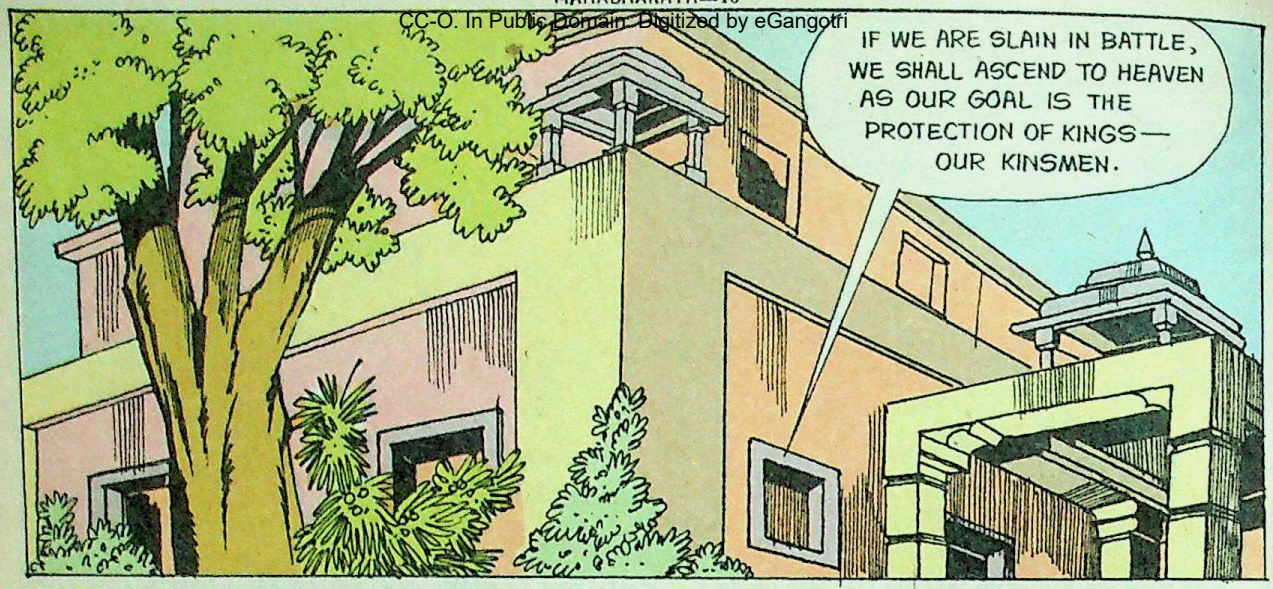

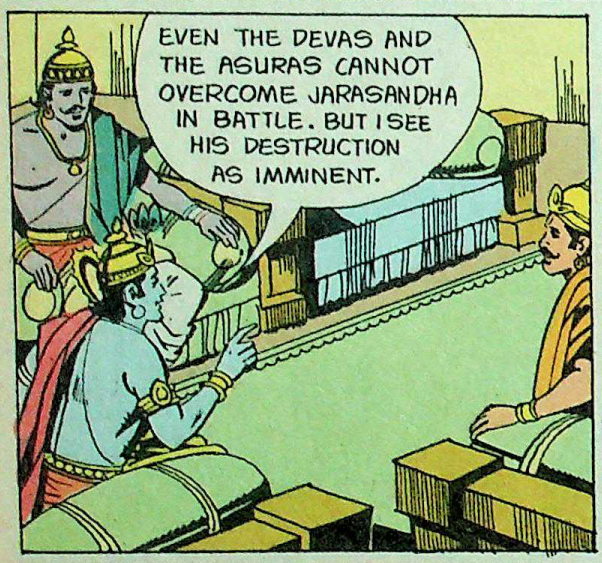

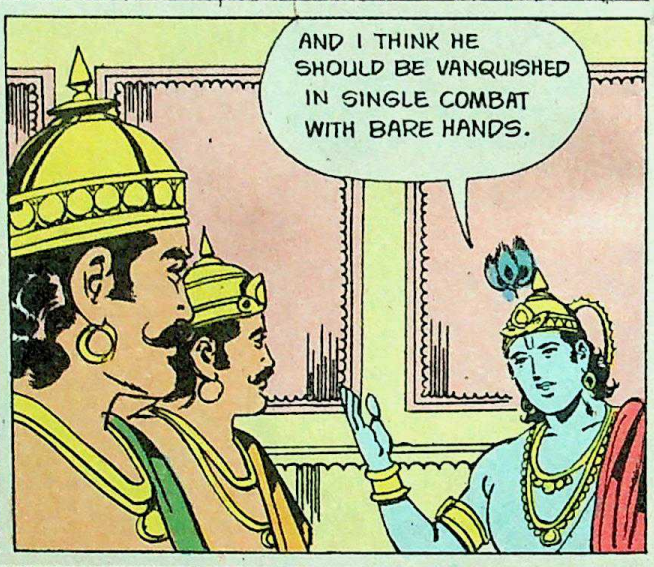

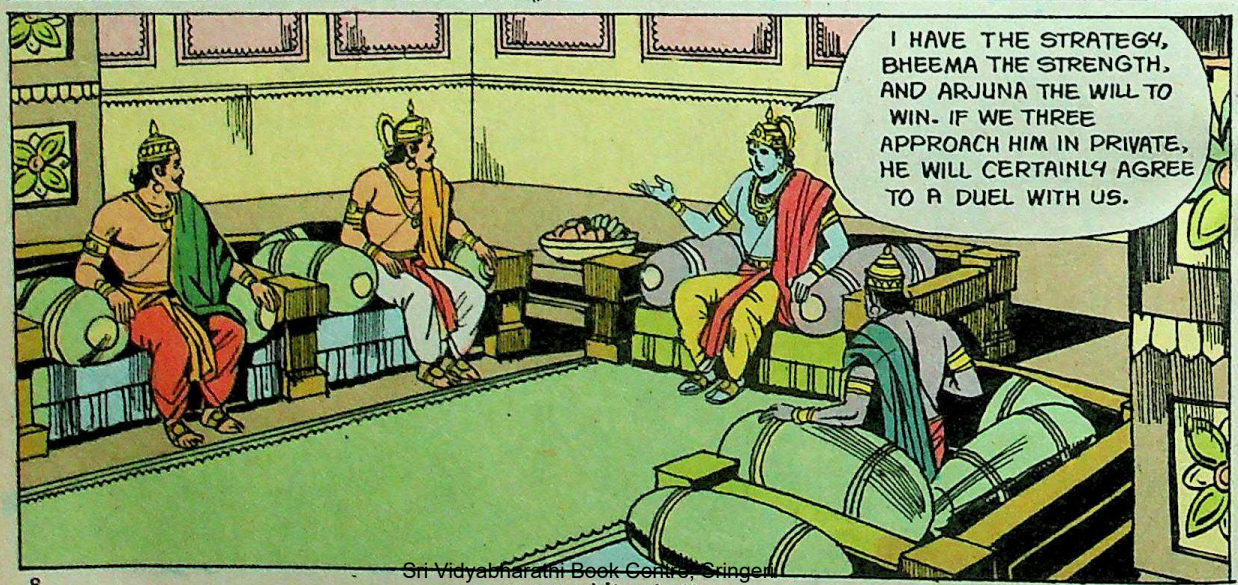

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AND PROMPTED BY VANITY HE WILL CHOOSE BHEEMA WHO CAN SEND HIM TO HIS DEATH.

IF YOU KNOW MY MIND AND IF YOU PLACE YOUR FAITH IN ME, THEN ENTRUST THEM TO ME.

"BEHOLDING THE BRIGHTENED FACES OF BHEEMA AND ARJUNA, YUDHISHTHIRA SAID:

O KRISHNA, PRAY DO NOT SPEAK THUS. YOU ARE THE LORD OF THE PANDAVAS. YOU ARE OUR SUPPORT AND WHAT YOU SAY IS RIGHT.

NOW THAT I HAVE YOUR GUIDANCE, I CAN CLEARLY FORESEE THE DEATH OF JARASANDHA, THE RELEASE OF THE KINGS AND THE COMPLETION OF THE RAJASOOYA. O BEST OF MEN, DO ALL THAT IS NEEDED TO COMPLETE THE TASK, UNDETERRED.

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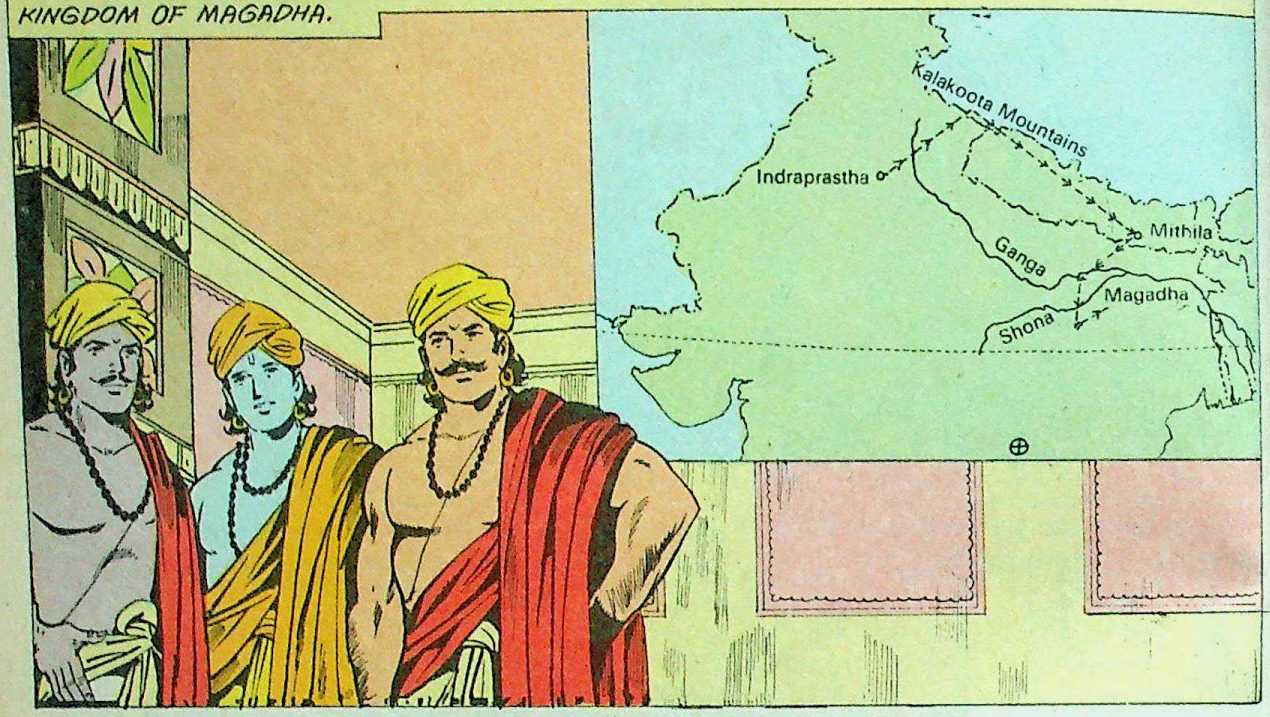
"THUS ADDRESSED BY YUDHISHTHIRA, O MONARCH, THE THREE SET OUT FOR MAGADHA DRESSED AS SNATAKA* BRAHMANAS. SETTING OUT FROM THE KURU KINGDOM THEY CROSSED THE KALAKOOTA MOUNTAIN, AS WELL AS SEVERAL RIVERS. THEY WENT ONWARD TO MITHILA, CROSSED THE GANGA AND THE SHONA WENDING THEIR WAY EASTWARD, TILL THEY ENTERED THE KINGDOM OF MAGADHA.



"ARRIVING AT THE HILLS OF GORATHA, THEY SAW THE CAPITAL OF MAGADHA. A WEALTHY CITY WITH PERENNIAL WATER-SUPPLY, WELL-EQUIPPED HOUSES AND HAPPY CITIZENS. AND KRISHNA SAID:

BEHOLD ARJUNA! GIRIVRAJA, THE CAPITAL OF MAGADHA, GUARDED BY THAT CHAIN OF FIVE HILLS.

* ONE WHO HAS LEARNT THE VEDAS.

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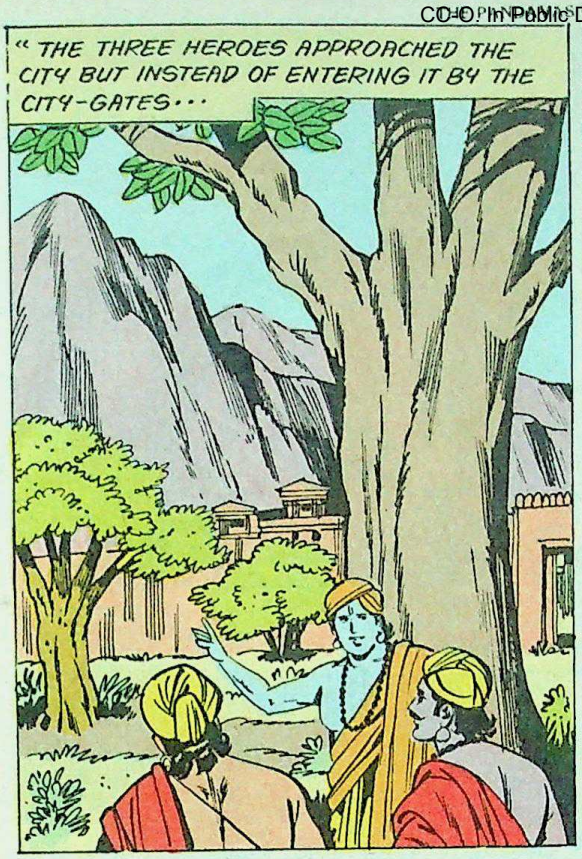

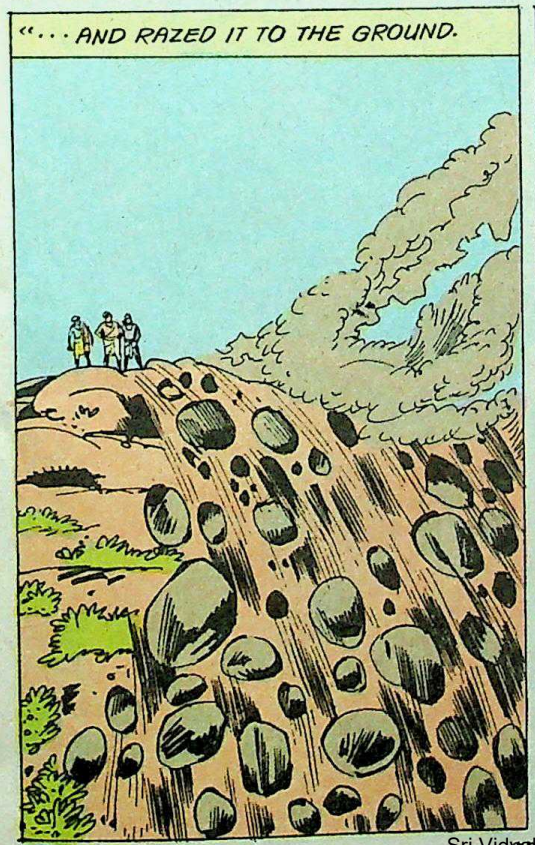

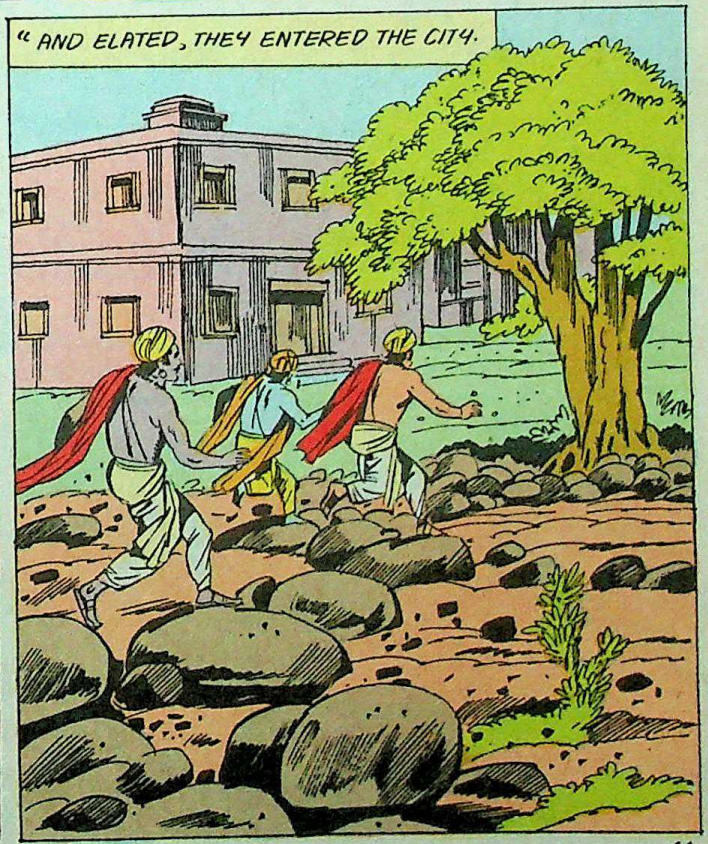

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"AS THEY WALKED UP THE ROYAL ROAD, THEY FORCIBLY TOOK FOR THEMSELVES SOME FLOWER GARLANDS FROM A VENDOR.

MEANWHILE THE BRAHMANAS OF THE CITY WENT TO JARASANDHA AND REPORTED TO HIM THE EVIL OMENS WHICH THEY HAD PERCEIVED.

"THE KING THEREUPON STARTED SACRIFICIAL RITUALS TO WARD OFF ANY EVIL.

"THEN THE THREE HEROES, ATTIRED IN COLOURFUL ROBES AND ANOINTED WITH SANDAL-PASTE AND DECKED WITH FLOWER GARLANDS MARCHED INTO THE ABODE OF JARASANDHA.

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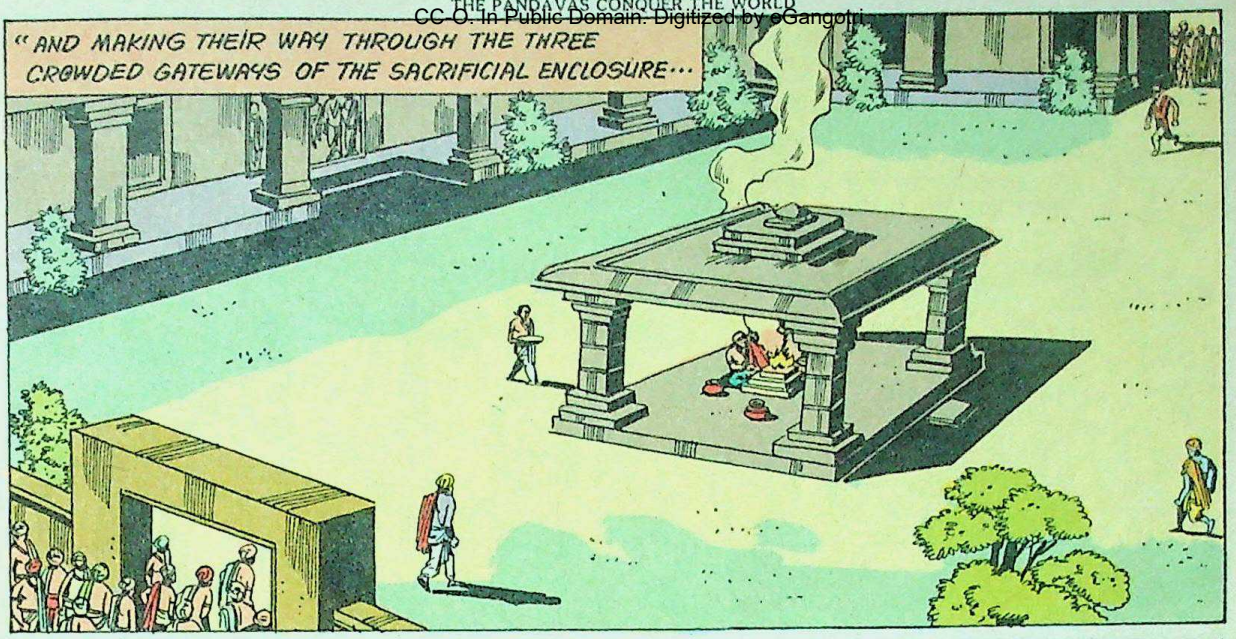

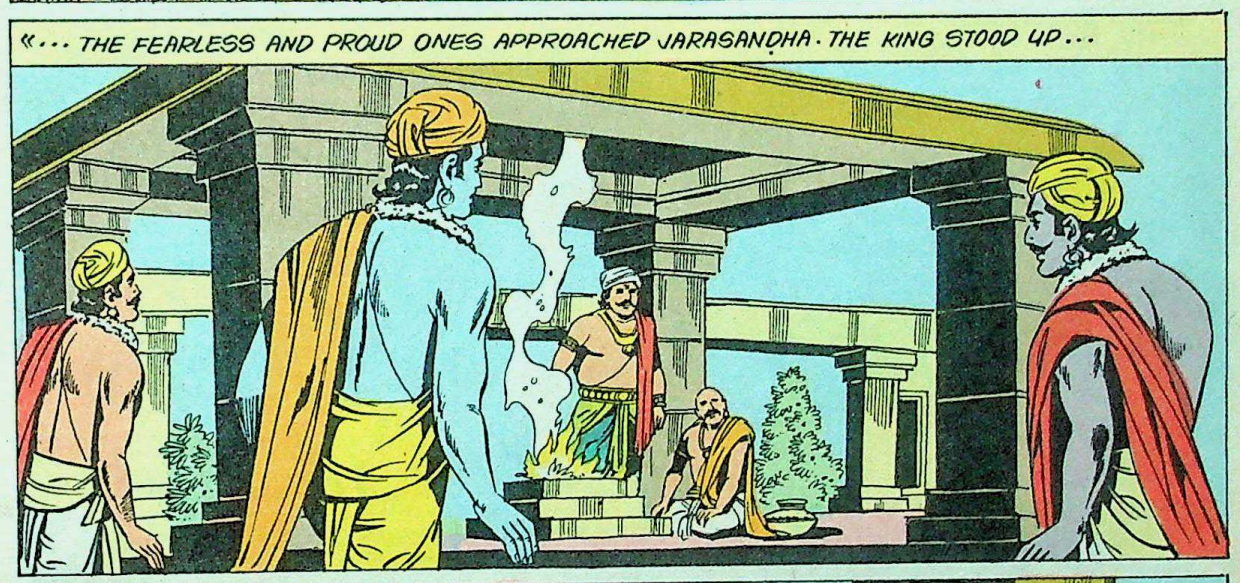

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"WHILE BHEEMA AND ARJUNA STOOD SILENTLY, KRISHNA SAID:

THESE TWO WILL SPEAK TO YOU ONLY AFTER MIDNIGHT AS THEY ARE BOUND BY A VOW.

THE KING, O MONARCH, THEN INSTALLED HIS GUARDS IN THE SACRIFICIAL APARTMENTS AND RETIRED TO HIS OWN CHAMBERS.

"THOUGH INTRIGUED BY THE ATTIRE OF HIS GUESTS, THE KING VISITED THEM AFTER MIDNIGHT AND WAITED ON THEM RESPECTFULLY.

"THEN THEY SAID TO HIM:

FARE YOU WELL!

"AS KRISHNA AND ARJUNA EXCHANGED GLANCES, JARASANDHA SAID:

BE SEATED.

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JARASANDHA SAID:

YOUR ENTRY OVER THE RAZED CHAITYAKA HILL IS AN ACT OF RECKLESS TRESPASS. THEN YOU INTRODUCE YOURSELVES AS BRAHMANAS, THOUGH YOU BEAR THE MARKS OF KSHATRIYA VIGOUR.

WHY ARE YOU RELUCTANT TO ACCEPT THE WORSHIP OFFERED BY ME? WHY ARE YOU HERE?

"KRISHNA REPLIED:

BRAVE MEN ENTER THE ABODE OF AN ENEMY THROUGH AN IRREGULAR GATE AND THAT OF A FRIEND BY THE REGULAR GATE.

WE HAVE ENTERED THE ABODE OF OUR ENEMY WITH A PURPOSE. THEREFORE WE DO NOT ACCEPT THE WORSHIP.

"JARASANDHA SAID:

EVEN AFTER MUCH THOUGHT, I CANNOT RECALL ANY HARM DONE TO YOU BY ME.

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"THEN HE SAID TO BHEEMA:

I WILL FIGHT WITH YOU. IT IS BETTER TO GO DOWN FIGHTING A FULL MAN.

JARASANDHA REMOVED HIS CROWN, O MONARCH, AND RECALLING HIS KSHATRIYA DHARMA, STOOD READY FOR THE ENCOUNTER.

"THEN, O MONARCH, JARASANDHA RUSHED AT BHEEMA WHO, ADVISED AND BLESSED BY KRISHNA WAS READY FOR THE FIGHT.

"THE TWO MIGHTY HEROES, WITH NOTHING BUT THEIR BARE HANDS FOR WEAPONS, STOOD FACING EACH OTHER, VIGOROUS AND EAGER.

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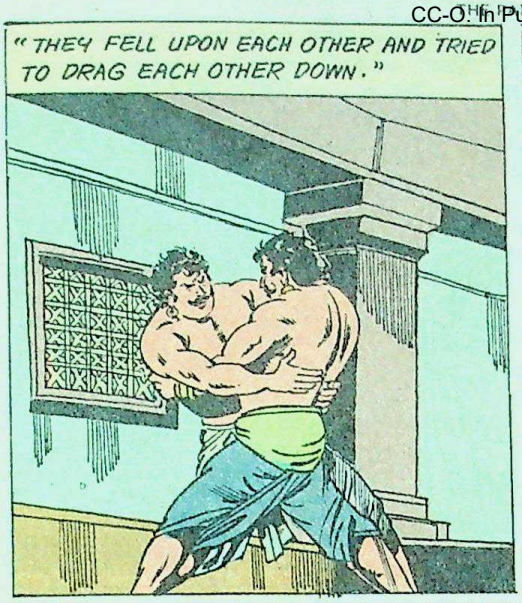

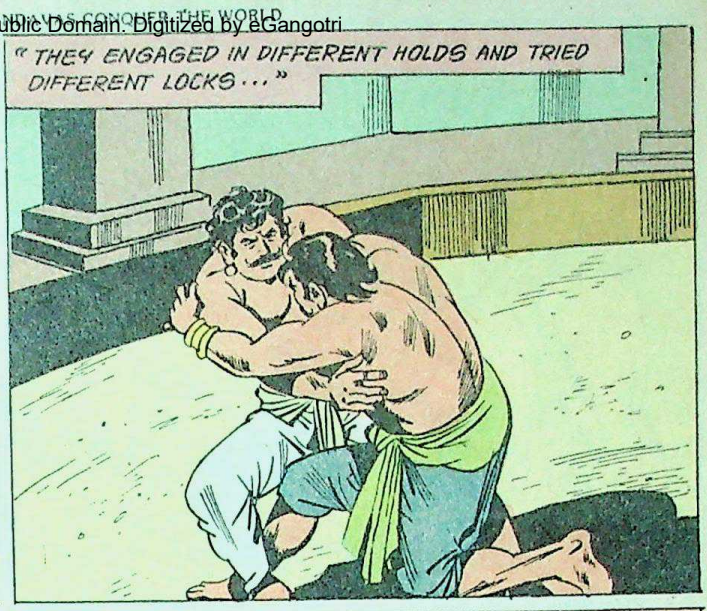

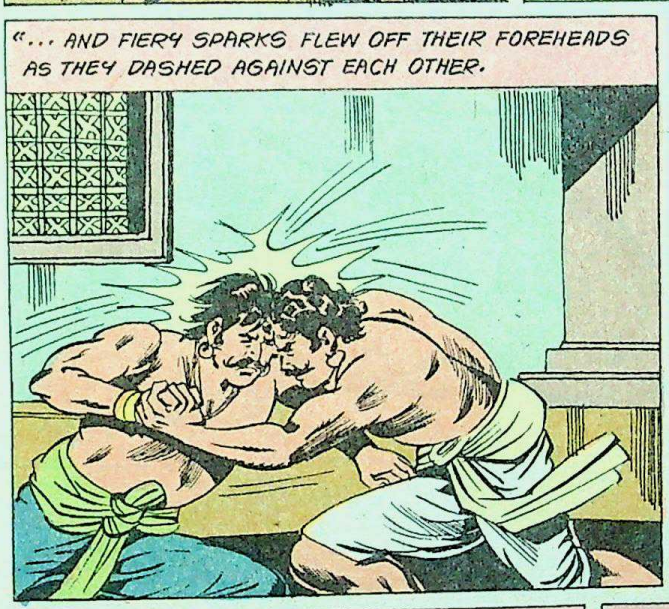

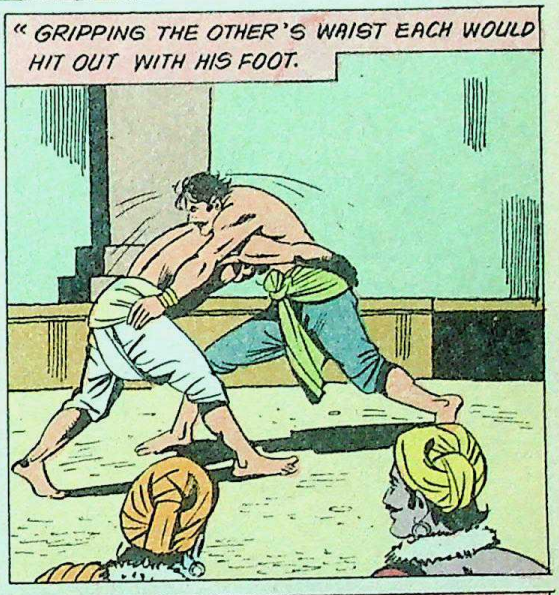

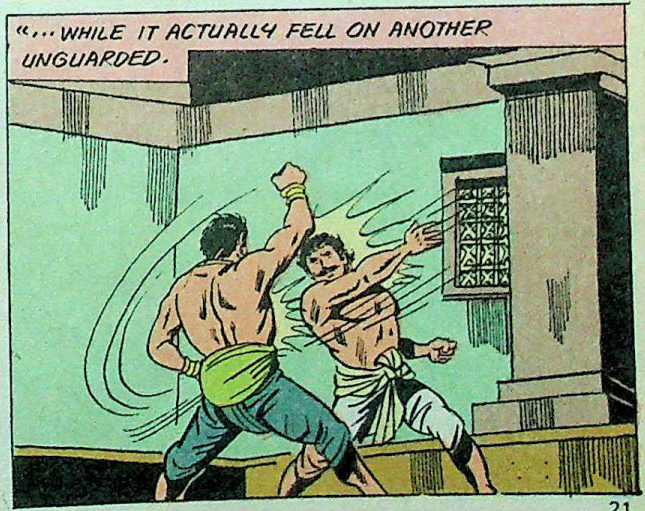

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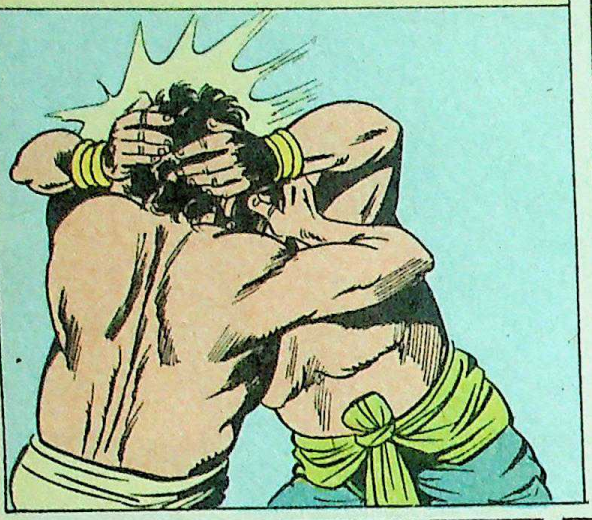
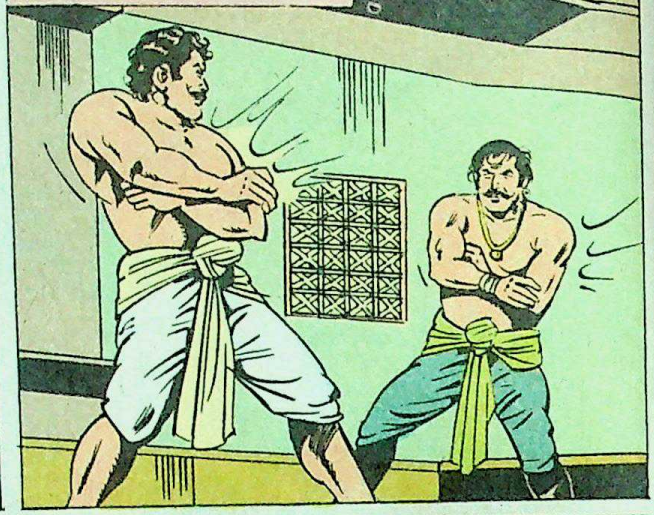
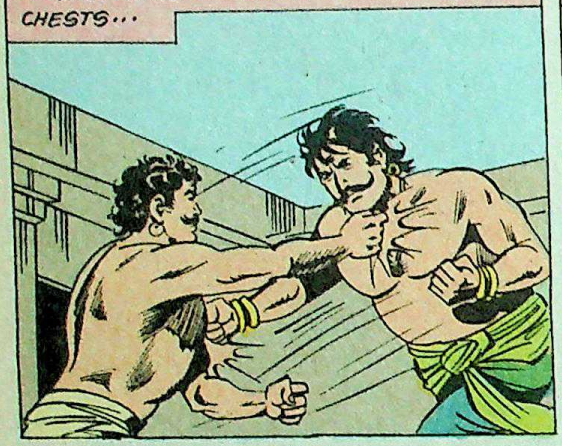
"EACH TRIED TO CRUSH THE SKULL OF THE OTHER WITH THE PROWESS OF HIS HANDS.



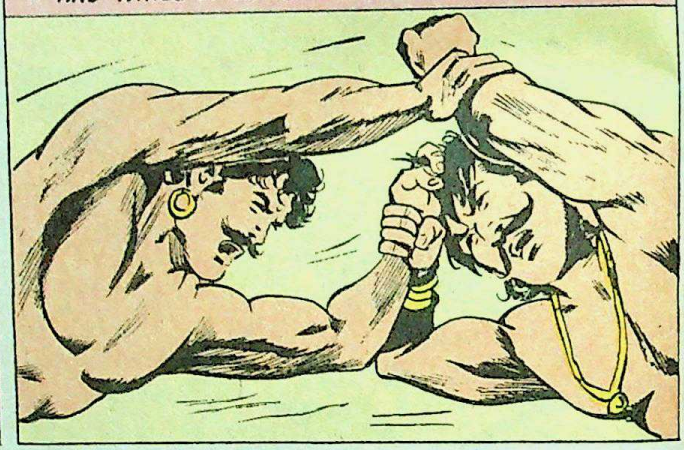
"THE SOUNDS THE WRESTLERS MADE WHILE SLAPPING THEIR ARMS...



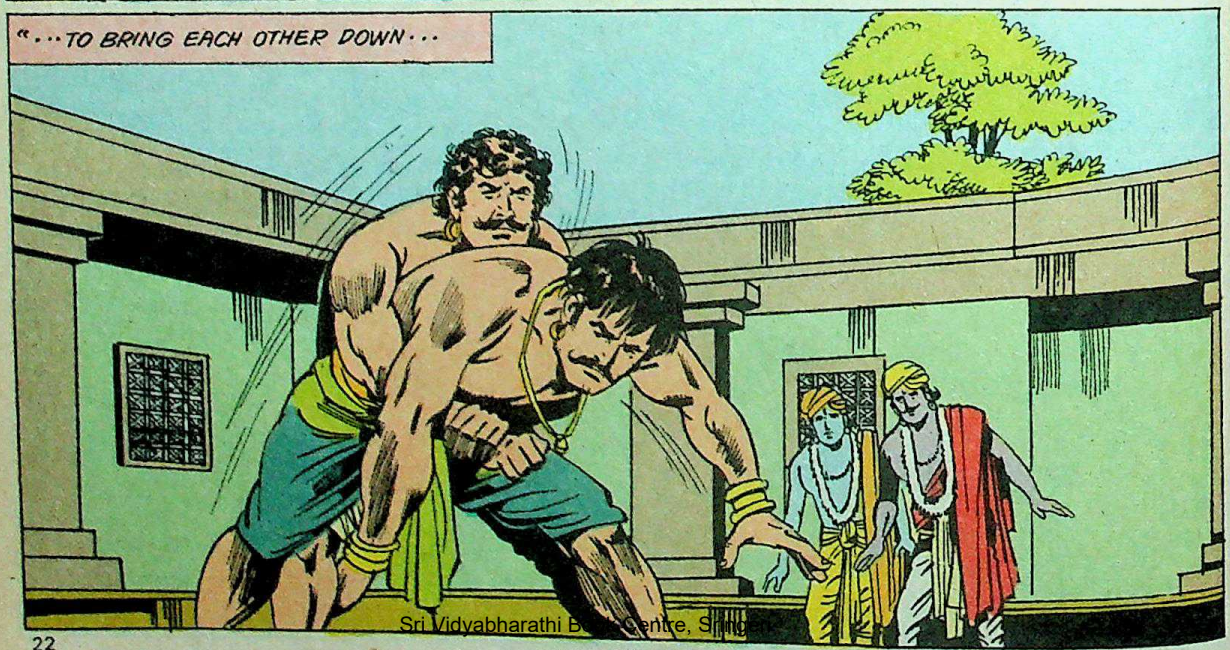
"...AND WHILE HITTING OUT AT EACH OTHER'S CHESTS...



"...AND WHILE DRAWING IN THEIR BREATHS...



"...TO BRING EACH OTHER DOWN...



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IT WAS A TERRIBLE FIGHT, O MONARCH, THE COMBAT COMMENCED ON THE FIRST LUNAR DAY OF THE MONTH OF KARTIK AND CONTINUED TO THE THIRTEENTH. THEN ON THE FOURTEENTH DAY...

"... PERCEIVING JARASANDHA FALLING BEHIND IN FATIGUE, KRISHNA REMINDED BHEEMA SAYING:

AN EXHAUSTED FOE IS NOT TO BE PRESSED HARD. HE MIGHT EVEN LOSE HIS LIFE. THEREFORE DO NOT BE HARD ON HIM. FIGHT HIM IF YOU WILL, BUT MATCHING HIS REDUCED MIGHT.

"BHEEMA UNDERSTOOD THAT THE TIME HAD COME FOR JARASANDHA'S DEATH AND SAID:

THIS WRETCH WHO DARED ME IS NOT TO BE SPARED.

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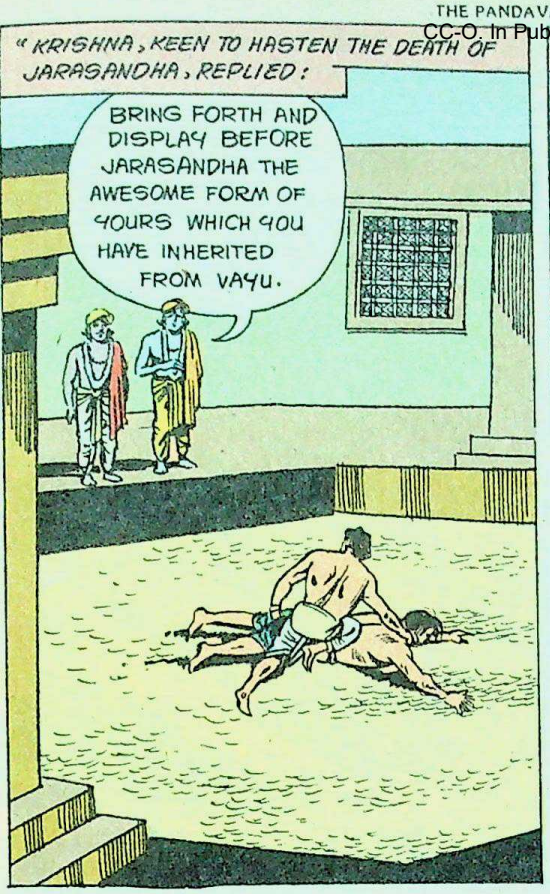

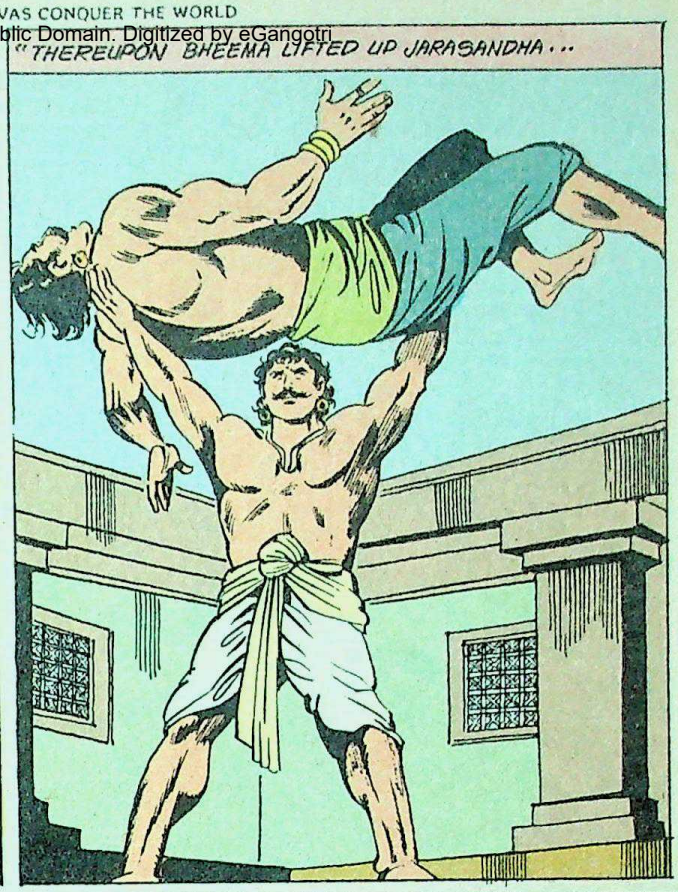

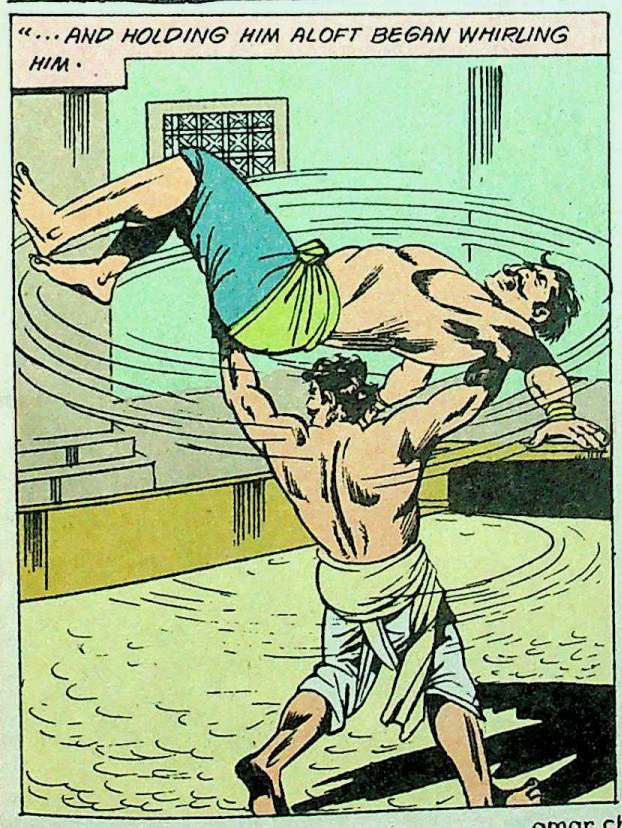

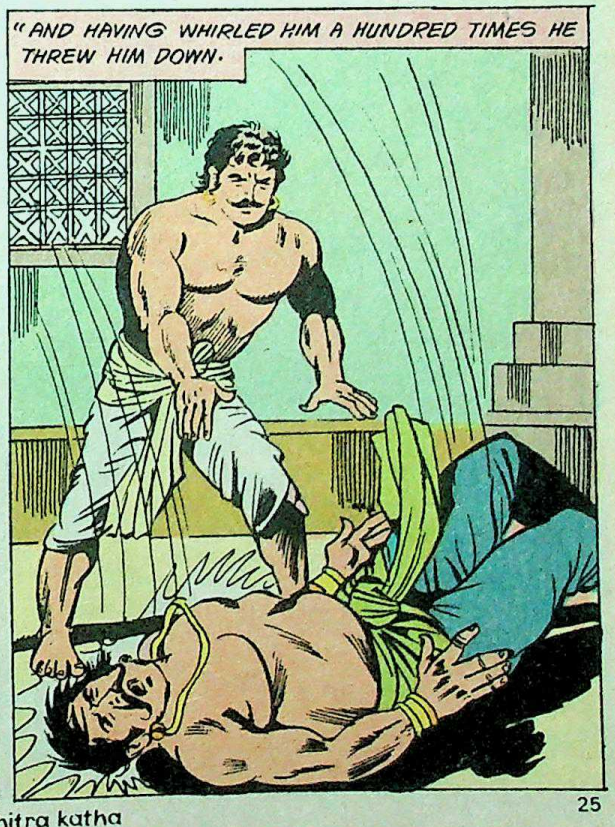

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THEN PRESSING HIS KNEES AGAINST THE FALLEN FOE, BROKE HIS BACK AND TORE HIS BODY IN TWO.

THE TRIUMPHANT ROAR OF BHEEMA AND THE DYING SHRIEK OF JARASANDHA, O MONARCH, MINGLED INTO A TERRIBLE SOUND THAT STRUCK TERROR IN THE HEARTS OF ALL CITIZENS OF MAGADHA.

"...THEN KRISHNA BROUGHT FORTH THE CHARIOT OF JARASANDHA AND, ASCENDING IT WITH BHEEMA AND ARJUNA, WENT...

"...AND SET FREE THE IMPRISONED KINGS.

"AND THEY SAID:

IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT OUR DELIVERANCE HAS BEEN AT YOUR HANDS WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF BHEEMA AND ARJUNA.

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"THEN KRISHNA SAID:

"ALL THOSE KINGS, O MONARCH, JOYOUSLY CONCURRED AND SAID:

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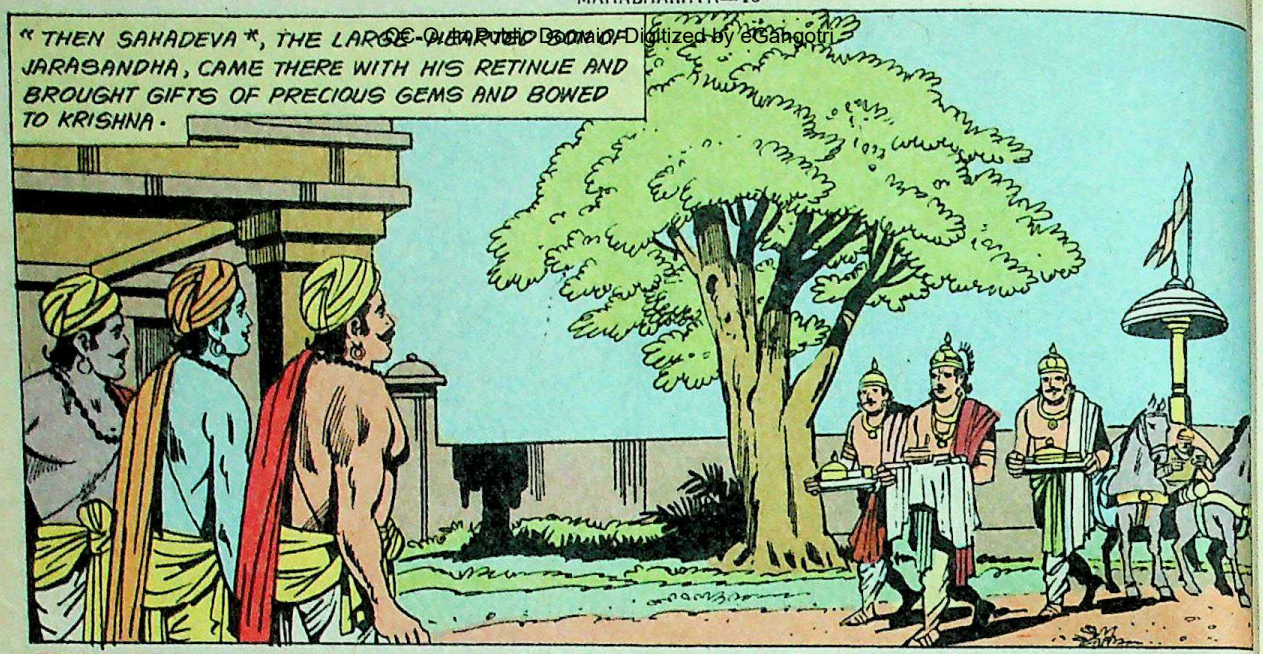

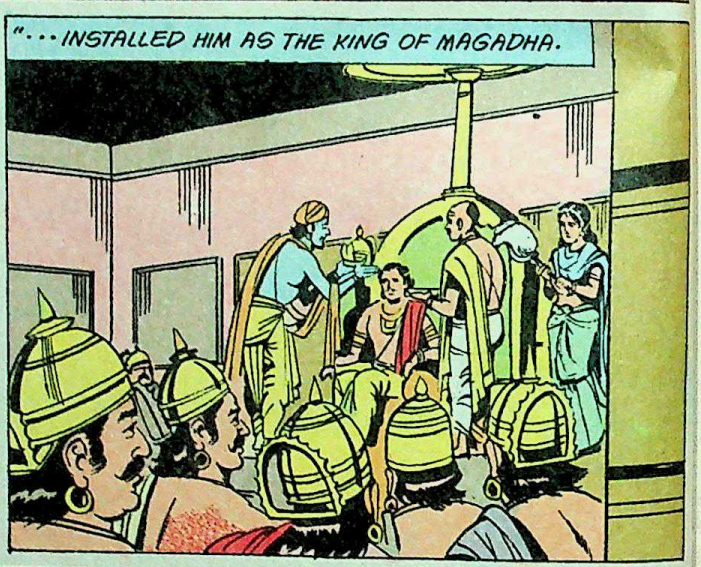

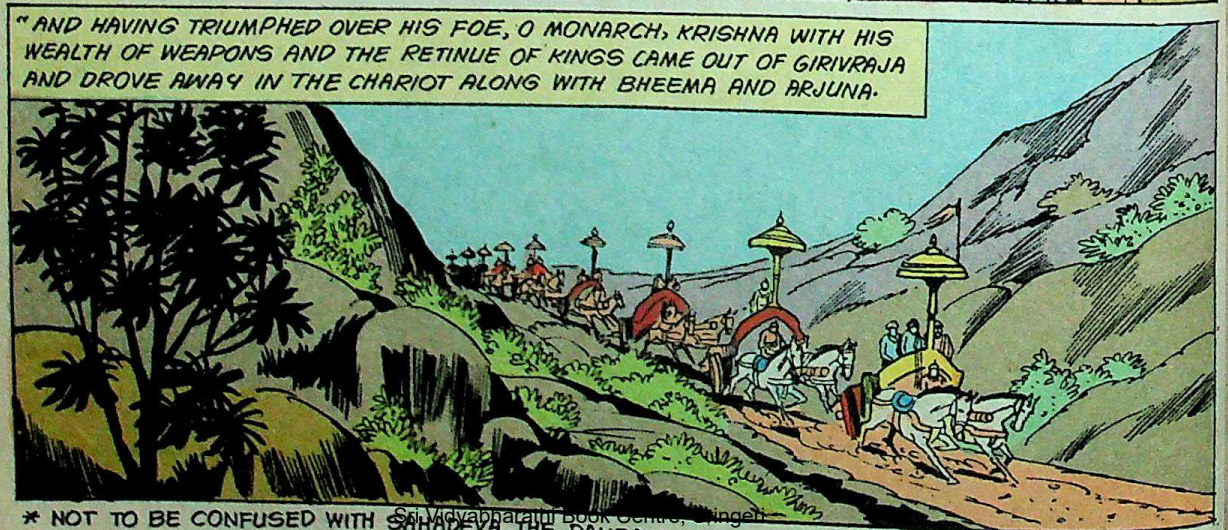

* NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH SAHADEVA, THE PANDAVA.

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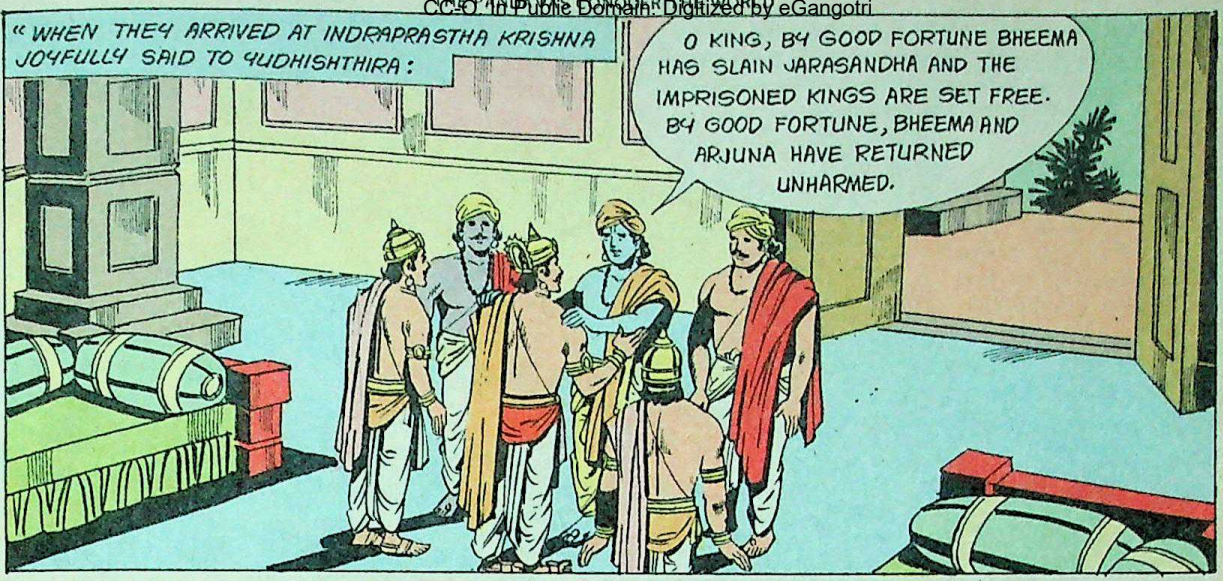

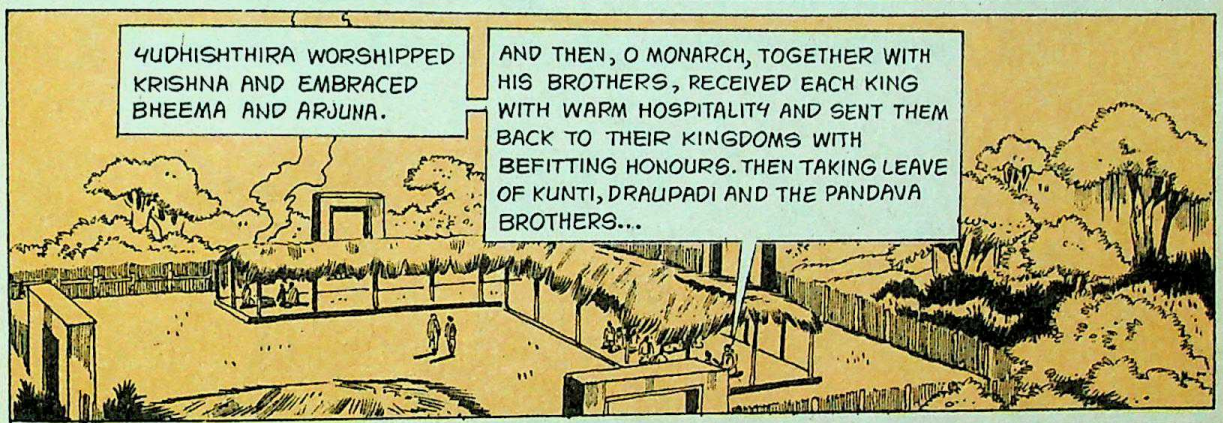

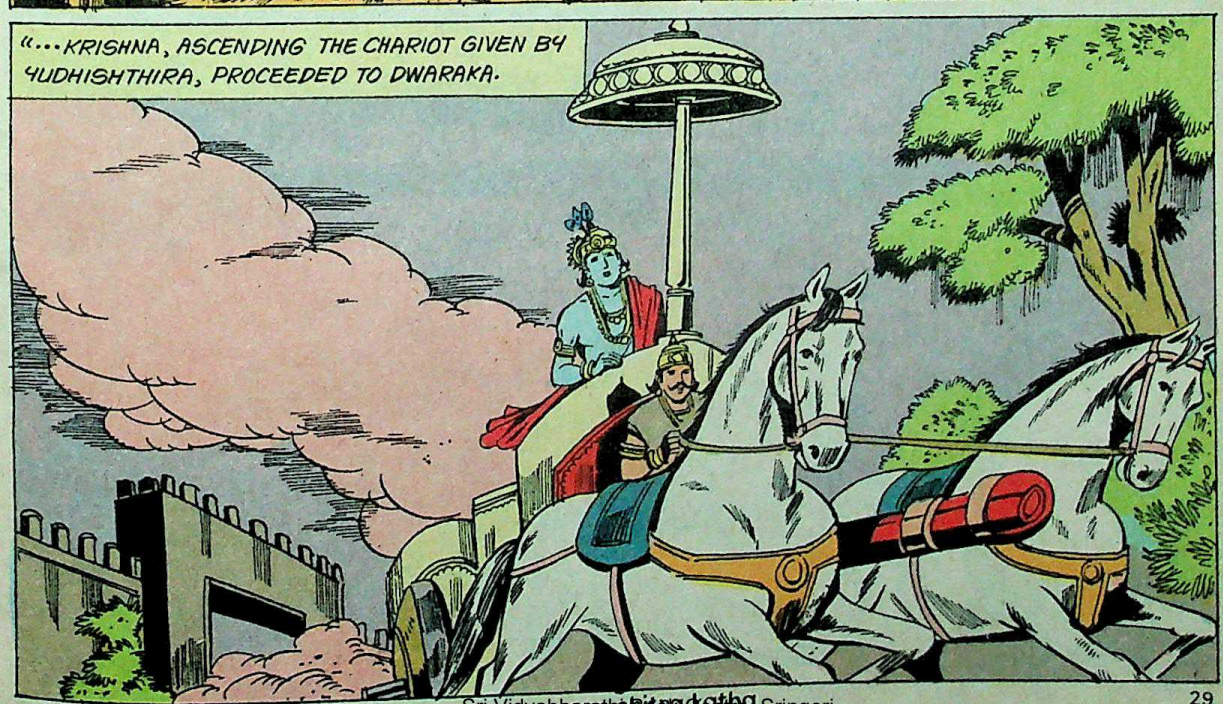

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"THEN ARJUNA, WHO HAD ACQUIRED THE EXCELLENT GANDEEVA BOW, THE EVERFUL QUIVER, THE CHARIOT AND THE PALACE HALL SAID TO YUDHISHTHIRA:

I THINK THAT NOW OUR TREASURY NEEDS TO BE AUGMENTED. I WISH TO PROCEED NORTHWARDS TO EXTRACT TRIBUTES.

"YUDHISHTHIRA SAID:

GO FORTH AFTER DUE PROPITIATIONS. VICTORY WILL BE YOURS.

"ARJUNA THEN SET OUT IN HIS MIRACULOUS CHARIOT GIVEN BY AGNI. A VAST ARMY WENT WITH HIM.

SIMILARLY BHEEMA AND THE TWINS ALSO SET OUT ON THEIR MISSION OF CONQUEST.

AND, O MONARCH, ARJUNA SUBJUGATED THE NORTH, BHEEMA THE EAST, SAHADEVA THE SOUTH AND NAKULA THE WEST.

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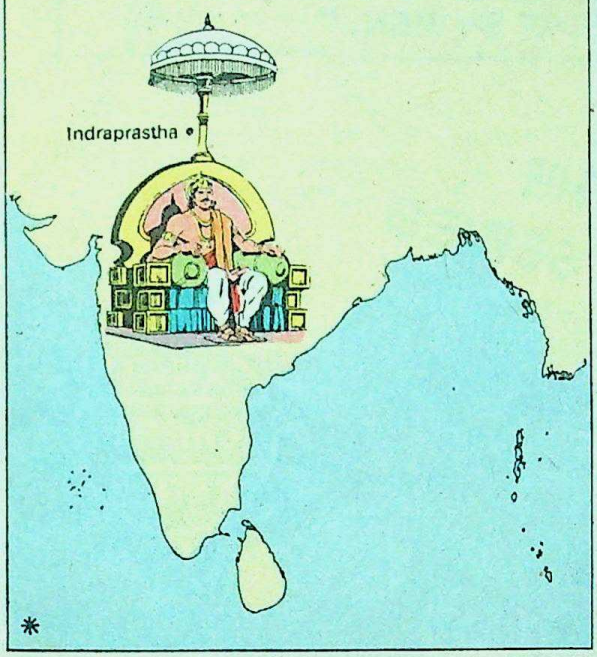
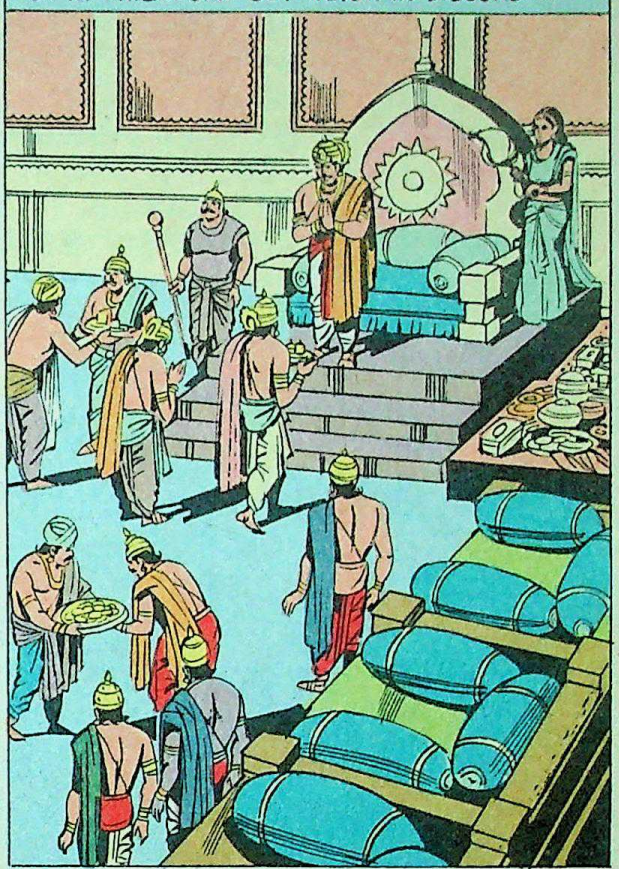
"AND UNDER THE JUST RULE OF YUDHISHTHIRA, EVEN CHEATS AND THIEVES AND SYCOPHANTS SPOKE NO LIES; AND TRADE, AGRICULTURE AND CATTLE-WEALTH PROSPERED, POLITICAL STABILITY PREVAILED.



"KINGS APPROACHED HIM EITHER WITH RESPECT OR IN FRIENDSHIP BUT NEVER IN DISCORD...



... AND HIS TREASURY WAS FILLED WITH SUCH BOUNTY AS TO LAST HUNDREDS OF YEARS.

AND YUDHISHTHIRA, AFTER ASSESSING THE MEANS AT HIS DISPOSAL, DECIDED TO PERFORM THE RAJASOOYA.

THUS ENDS THE SIXTEENTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL OF VYASA'S IMMORTAL ITIHASA THE MAHABHARATA.

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VALMIKI'S RAMAYANA IS BELIEVED TO BE THE FIRST POETIC WORK WRITTEN IN SANSKRIT; IT IS, THEREFORE, REFERRED TO AS THE ADIKAVYA. IT IS SAID THAT BRAHMA ASSURED VALMIKI THAT "AS LONG AS THE MOUNTAINS STAND AND THE RIVERS FLOW, SO LONG SHALL THE RAMAYANA BE READ BY MEN."

THE IMMORTAL EPIC OF VALMIKI NOW IN THE AMAR CHITRA KATHA SERIES

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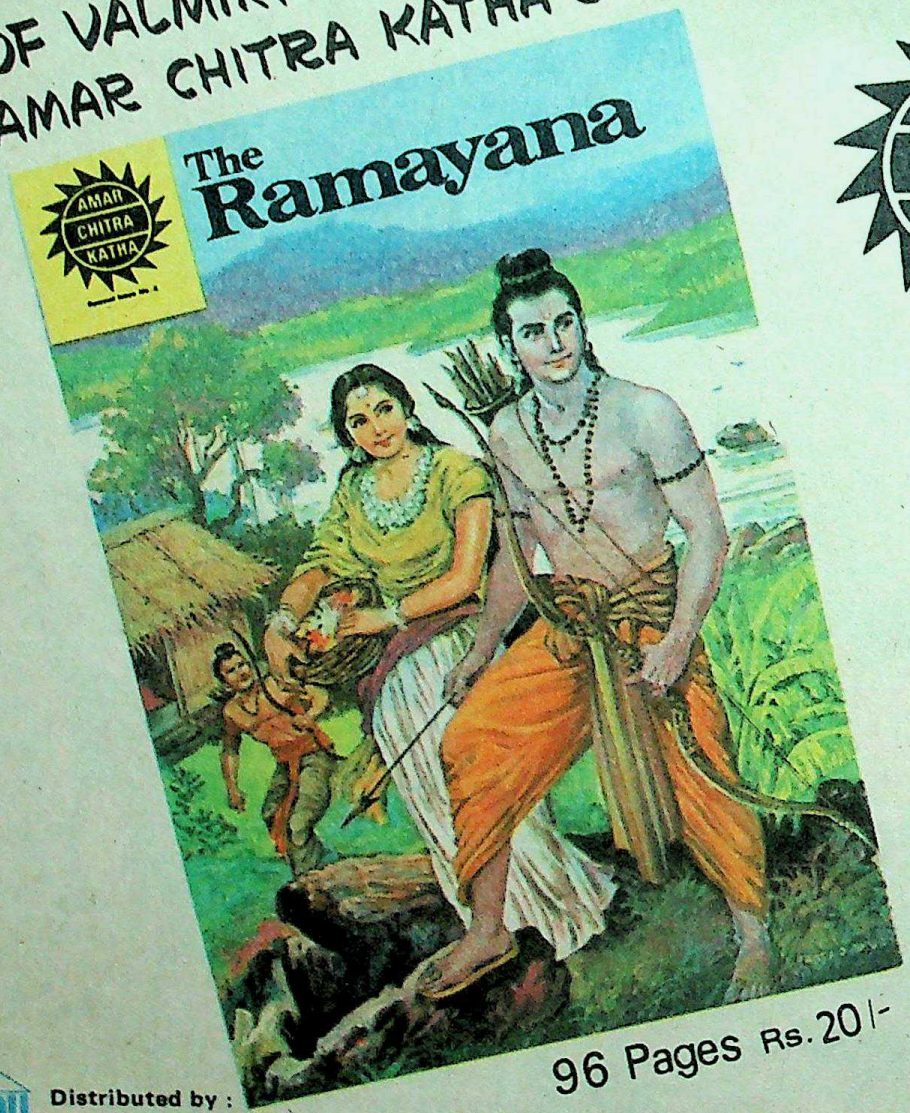

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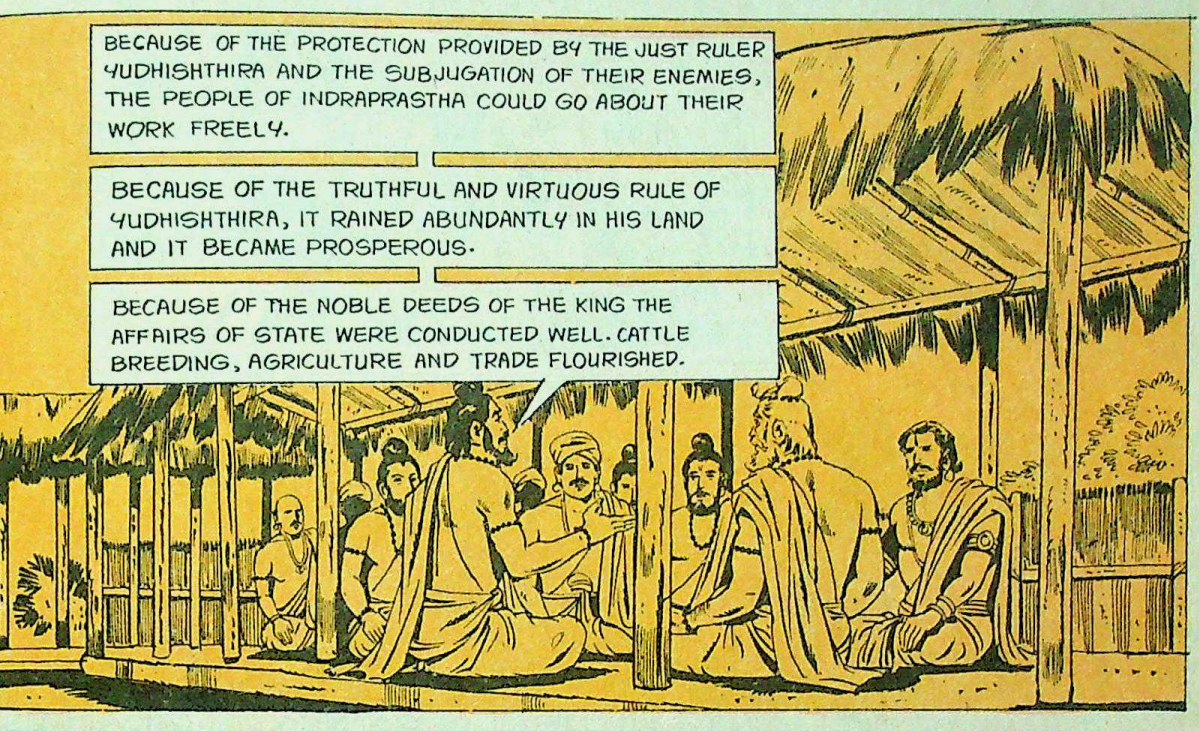
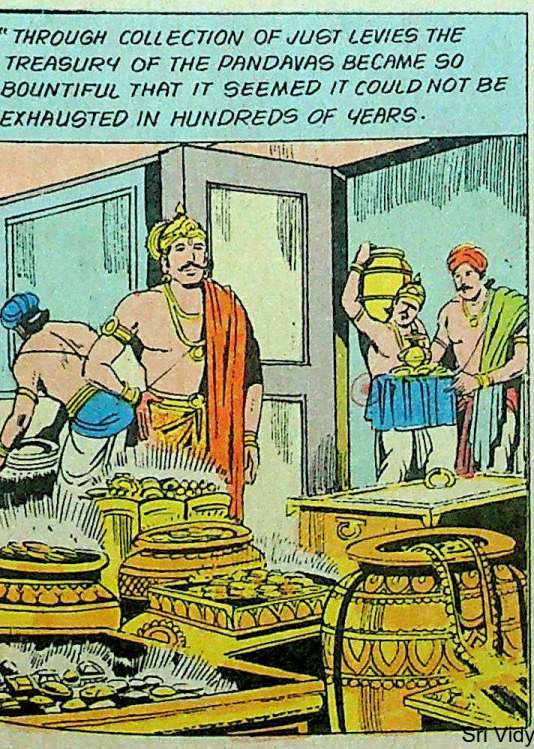
Mahabharata – 17

YUDHISHTHIRA'S RAJASOOYA YAJNA





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"HIS WELL-WISHERS ALSO ADVISED YUDHISHTHIRA—

O LORD! THE APPROPRIATE TIME HAS ARRIVED FOR YOU TO PERFORM THE RAJASOOYA YAJNA.

"KRISHNA APPEARED WHILE THEY WERE SPEAKING THUS—

"YUDHISHTHIRA RESPECTFULLY WELCOMED KRISHNA, THE LORD OF THE PAST, THE FUTURE AND THE PRESENT

"AFTER YUDHISHTHIRA ENQUIRED OF HIS WELL-BEING, KRISHNA EXTOLLED HIS VIRTUES AND SAID:

O TIGER AMONG KINGS, YOU DESERVE TO BE EMPEROR. IT IS PROPER THAT YOU PERFORM THE YAJNA.

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"THEN, YUDHISHTHIRA, THE SUPREME ONE AMONG THE KINGS AND OF THE KURU RACE, BADE SAHADEVA —

SEND SPEEDY MESSENGERS WITH INVITATIONS.

"SAHADEVA ACCORDINGLY DESPATCHED THE MESSENGERS —

INVITE ALL HONOURABLE BRAHMANAS, KINGS, VAISHYAS AND SHOODRAS OF THE LAND TO THE YAJNA.

"NAKULA WAS SENT TO INVITE BHEESHMA, DRONA, DHRITARASHTRA, VIDURA, KRIPA AND THE KAURAVAS.

"ALL THE INVITEES ARRIVED IN A JOYOUS MOOD.

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Amar Chitra Katha

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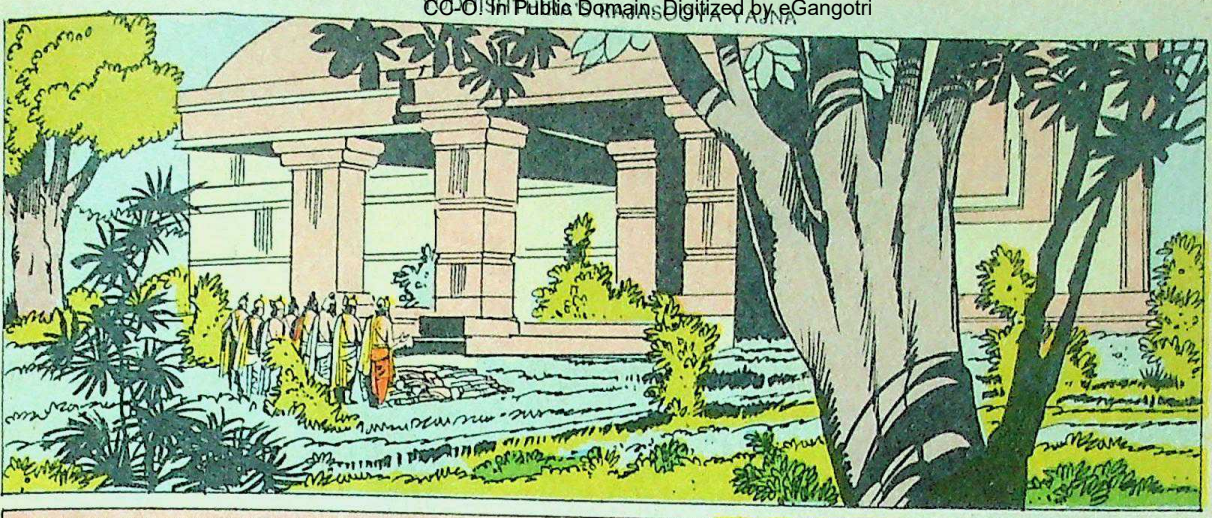
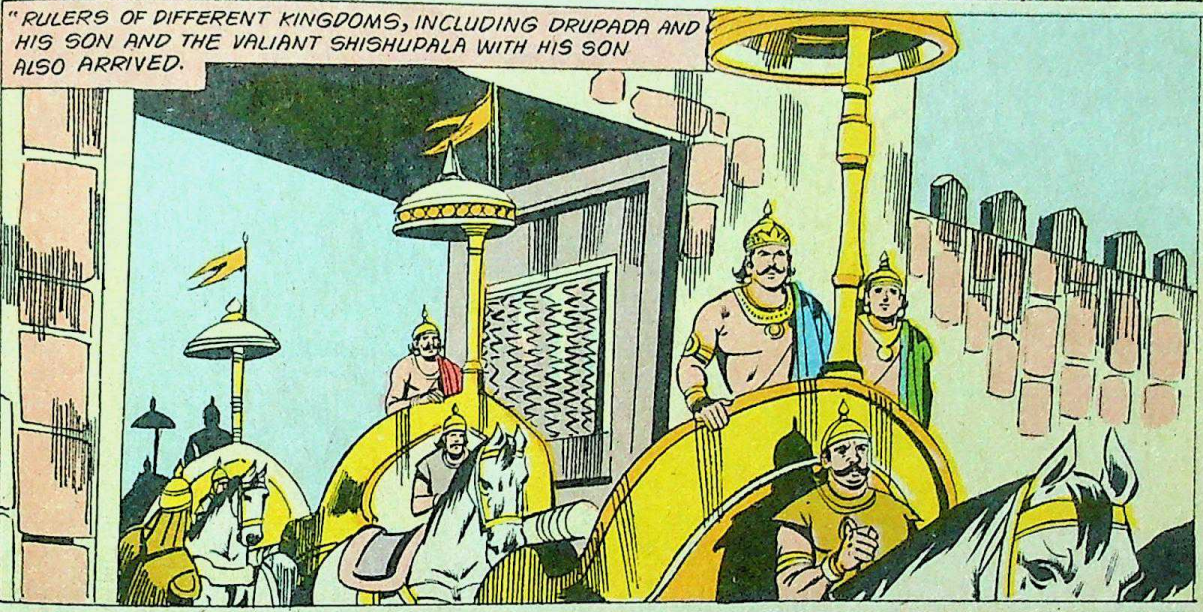
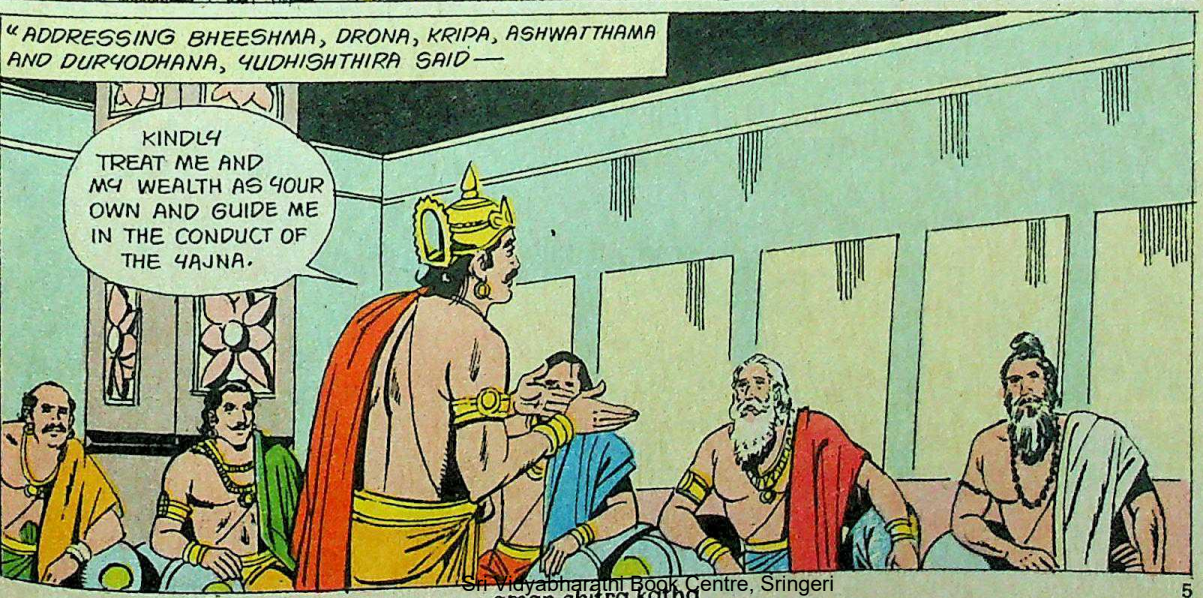


"RULERS OF DIFFERENT KINGDOMS, INCLUDING DRUPADA AND HIS SON AND THE VALIANT SHISHUPALA WITH HIS SON ALSO ARRIVED.



"ADDRESSING BHEESHMA, DRONA, KRIPA, ASHWATTHAMA AND DURYODHANA, YUDHISHTHIRA SAID—



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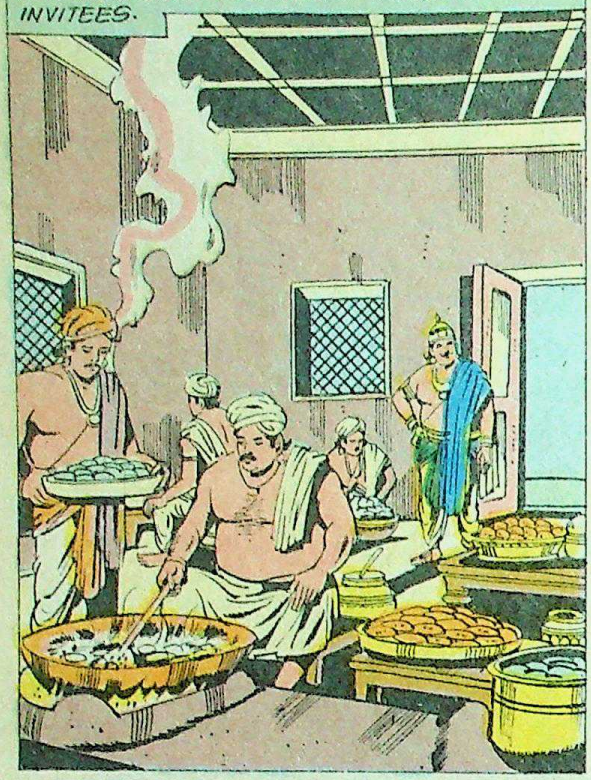
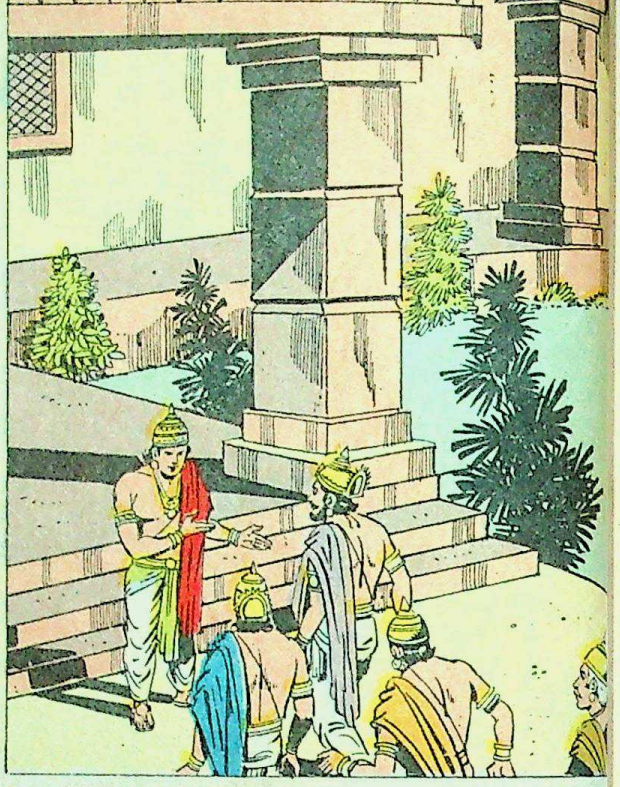
"YUDHISHTHIRA ASSIGNED DUTIES PERTAINING TO THE YAJNA TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE. DUHSHASANA WAS ASSIGNED THE TASK OF FEEDING THE INVITEES.



"SANJAYA WAS APPOINTED TO LOOK AFTER THE PROTOCOL.



"THE SAFE-KEEPING OF THE DIAMONDS, GOLD AND GEMS AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF GIFTS TO BRAHMANAS WERE ENTRUSTED TO KRIPA.

"THE GREAT AND WISE BHEESHMA AND DRONA WERE ASKED TO ENSURE THAT ALL THE DUTIES ASSIGNED WERE PROPERLY CARRIED OUT.

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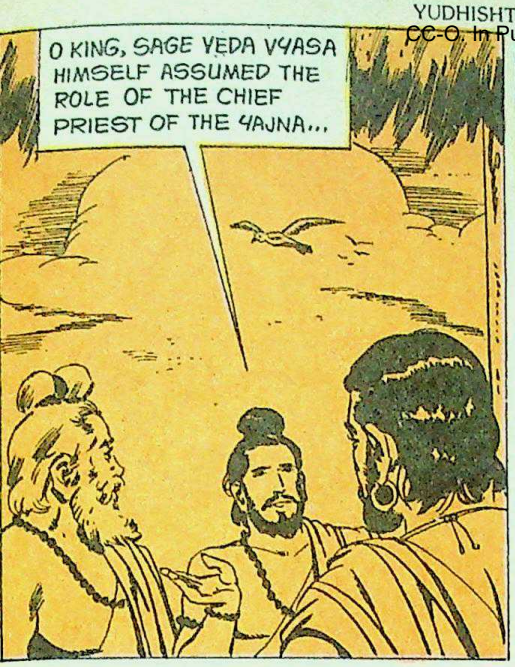

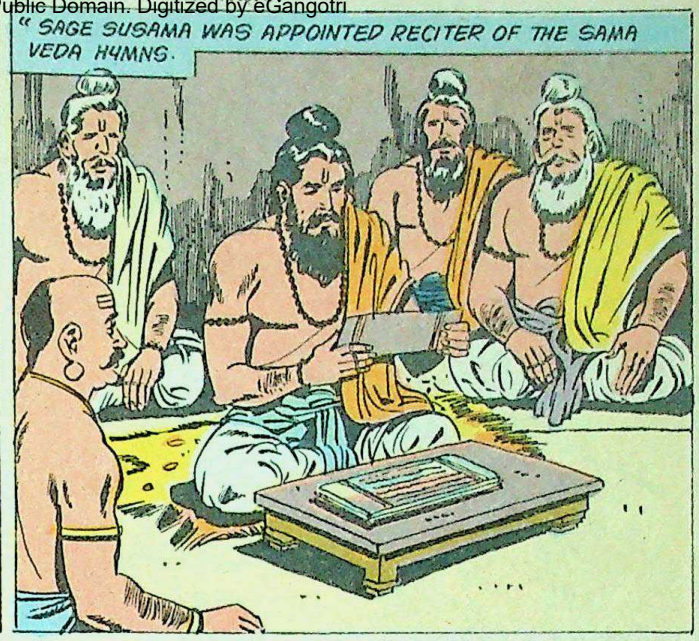

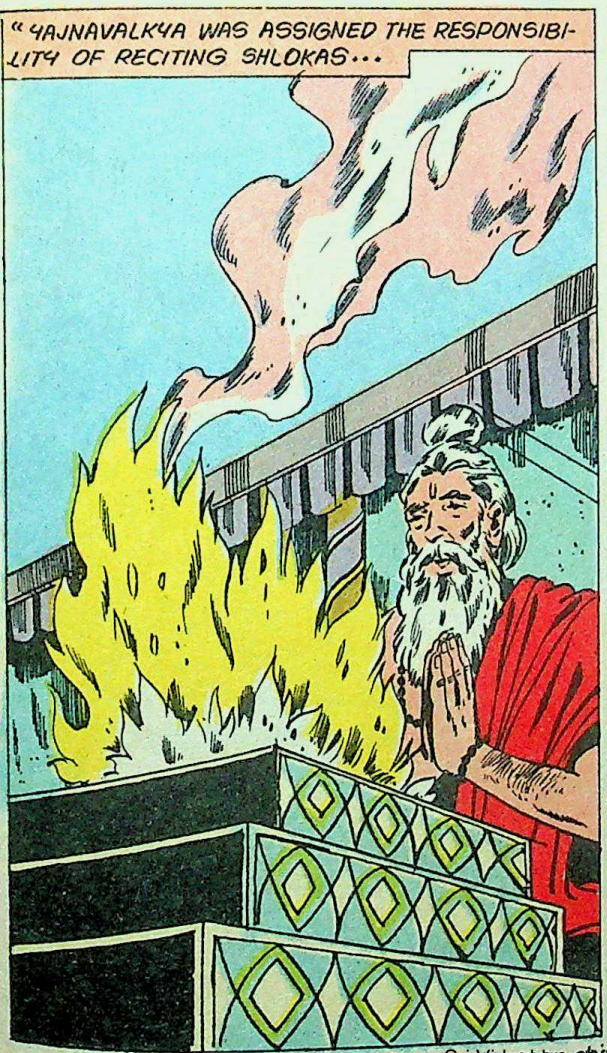

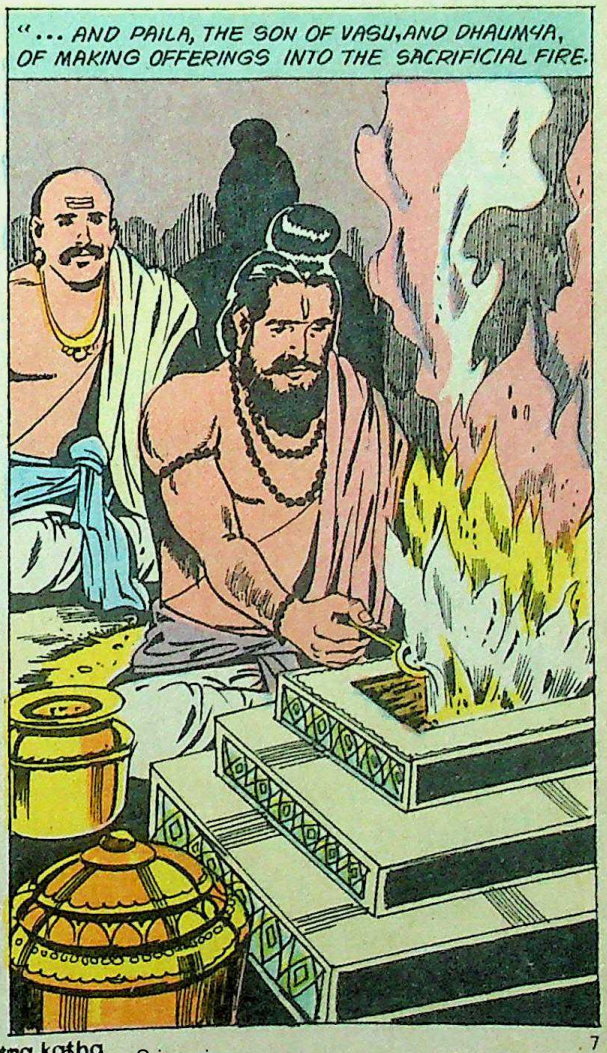

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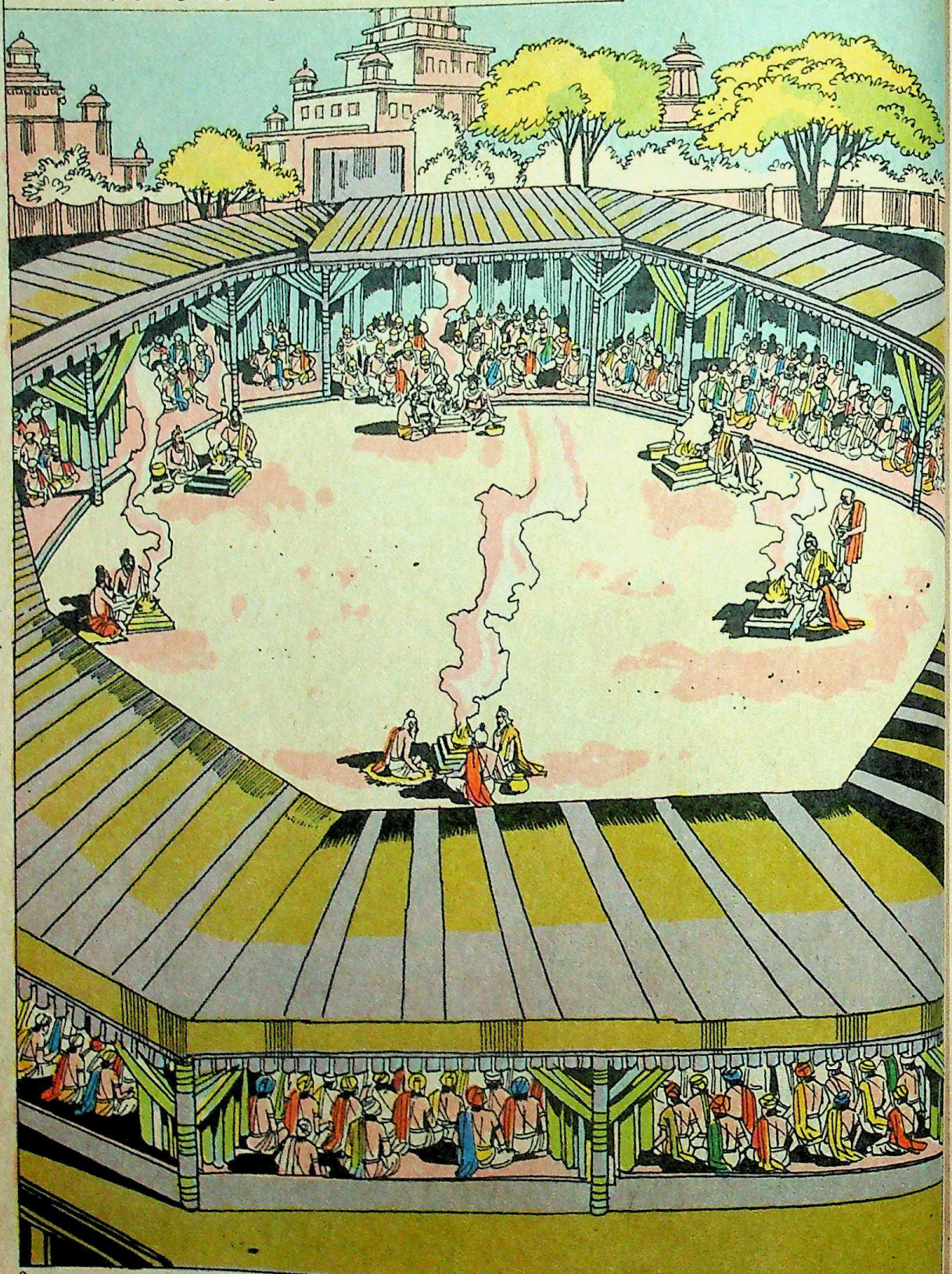
"YUDHISHTHIRA, AS THOUGH VYING WITH THE GODS IN WEALTH, COMMENCED THE YAJNA OF SIX FIRES...



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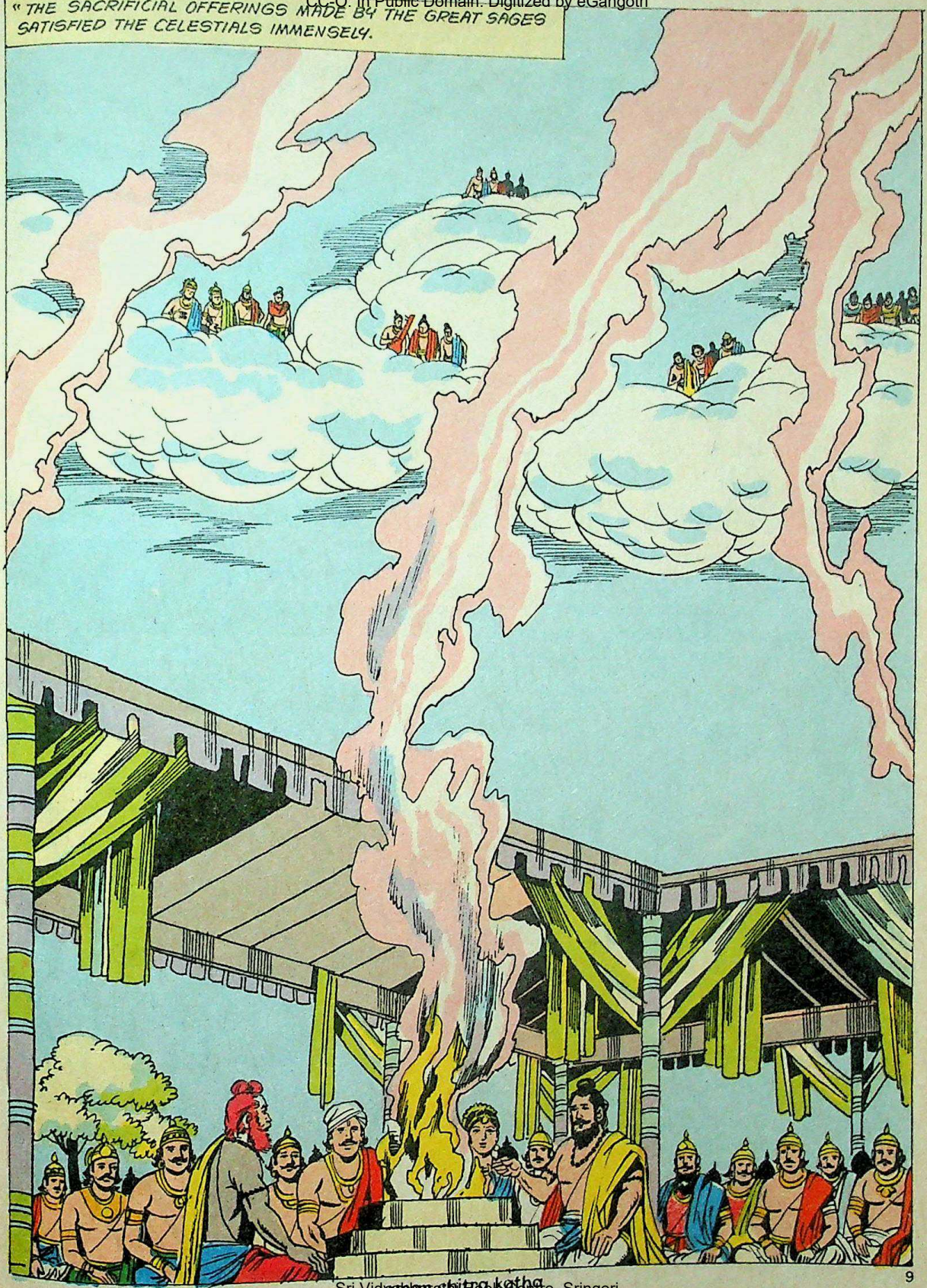

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"ON THE DAY OF THE CEREMONIAL BATH, THE GRAND-SIRE, THE KINGS, ENTERED THE INNER QUARTERS OF THE SACRIFICIAL MANSION TO RECEIVE HONOURS.

"GRACED BY THE PRESENCE OF NARADA, THE FOREMOST AMONG SAGES, AND THE SAINTLY KINGS, THE ASSEMBLY IN THE SACRIFICIAL MANSION WAS AS GLORIOUS AS THE ASSEMBLY OF BRAHMA*. THERE BHEESHMA ADDRESSED YUDHISHTHIRA—

O BHARATA†, OFFER SUITABLE WORSHIP TO THE KINGS WHO DESERVE YOUR RESPECT.

* THE CREATOR, ACCORDING TO HINDU MYTHOLOGY.

† DESCENDANT OF BHARATA

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HAVING OBTAINED THE CONSENT OF BHEESHMA, THE VALOROUS SAHADEVA OFFERED THE FIRST LIBATION TO KRISHNA OF THE VRISHNI RACE.

"KRISHNA ACCEPTED THE WORSHIP IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SHASTRAS.

"BUT SHISHUPALA COULD NOT BEAR TO SEE THE WORSHIP OF KRISHNA.

O PANDAVA, KRISHNA DOES NOT DESERVE TO RECEIVE THIS SINGULAR HONOUR WHEN SO MANY GREAT LORDS OF THE EARTH ARE PRESENT HERE.

YUDHISHTHIRA, THIS WILFUL AFFRONT TO THE HONOUR OF THE OTHER MEN DOES NOT BEFIT THE GREAT PANDAVAS.

O PANDAVAS, YOU ARE MERE CHILDREN, SO YOU DO NOT KNOW THE SUBTLETIES OF DHARMA.

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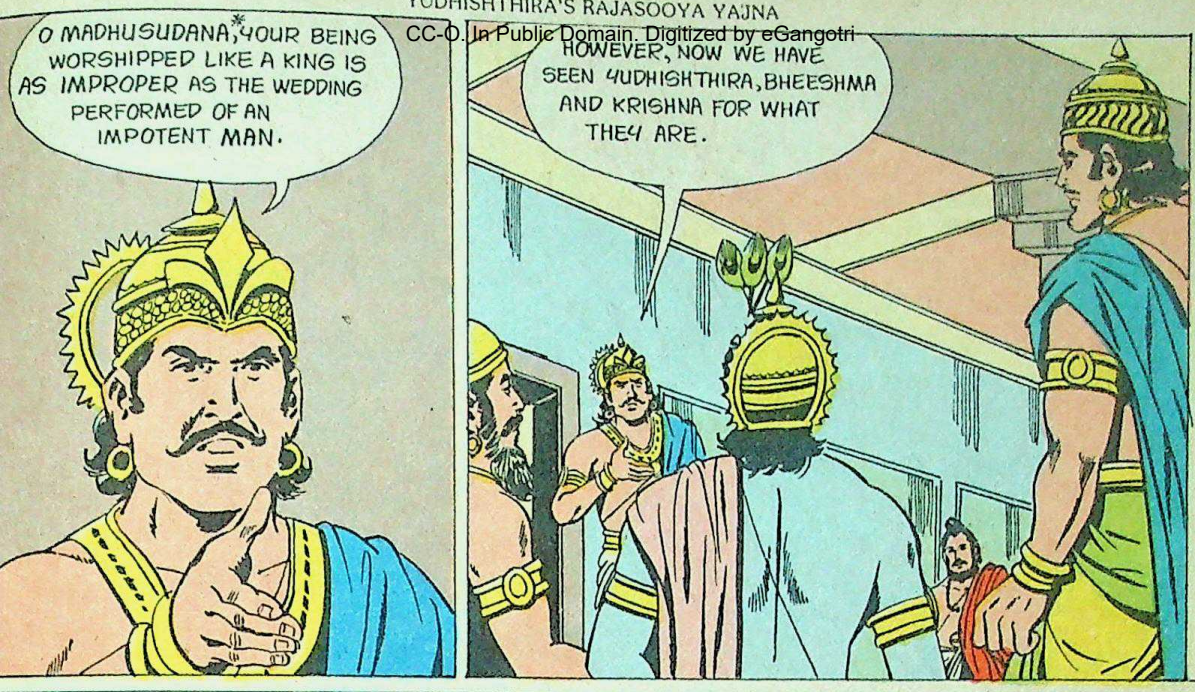

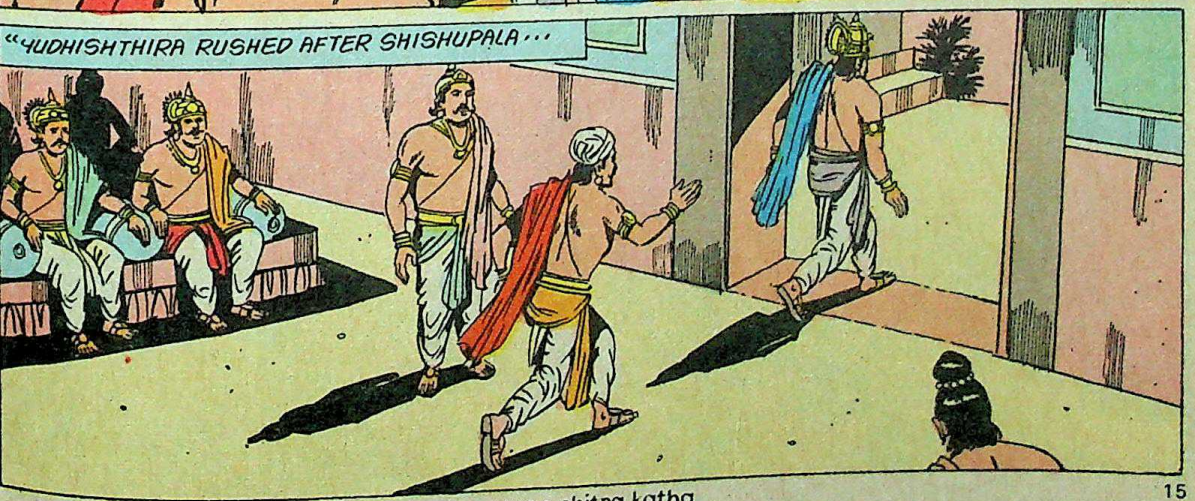

* KRISHNA (KILLER OF MADHU)

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"... AND PACIFIED HIM WITH THESE WORDS UTTERED PLEASANTLY—

O LORD OF MEN, YOUR UTTERANCES ARE NOT WORTHY OF YOU. THEY ARE IMPROPER AND HARSH.

IT IS NOT CONCEIVABLE THAT BHEESHMA, THE SON OF SHANTANU DOES NOT KNOW WHAT IS PROPER. DO NOT, THEREFORE, SAY THINGS THAT OFFEND HIM.

BEHOLD THESE KINGS WHO ARE OLDER THAN YOU. EVEN THEY APPROVE OF THE WORSHIP OF KRISHNA, AND SO SHOULD YOU, TOO.

THEN BHEESHMA SAID:

IT IS FUTILE TO PLEAD WITH ONE WHO DOES NOT APPRECIATE THE HONOUR BESTOWED UPON KRISHNA WHO IS THE PATRIARCH OF ALL THE WORLDS...

... IN THIS ASSEMBLY I SEE NO KING WHO HAS NOT BEEN SUBDUED BY THE GLORY OF KRISHNA.

THEREFORE, EVEN IN THE PRESENCE OF THESE ELDERS I WORSHIP KRISHNA AND NONE OTHER.

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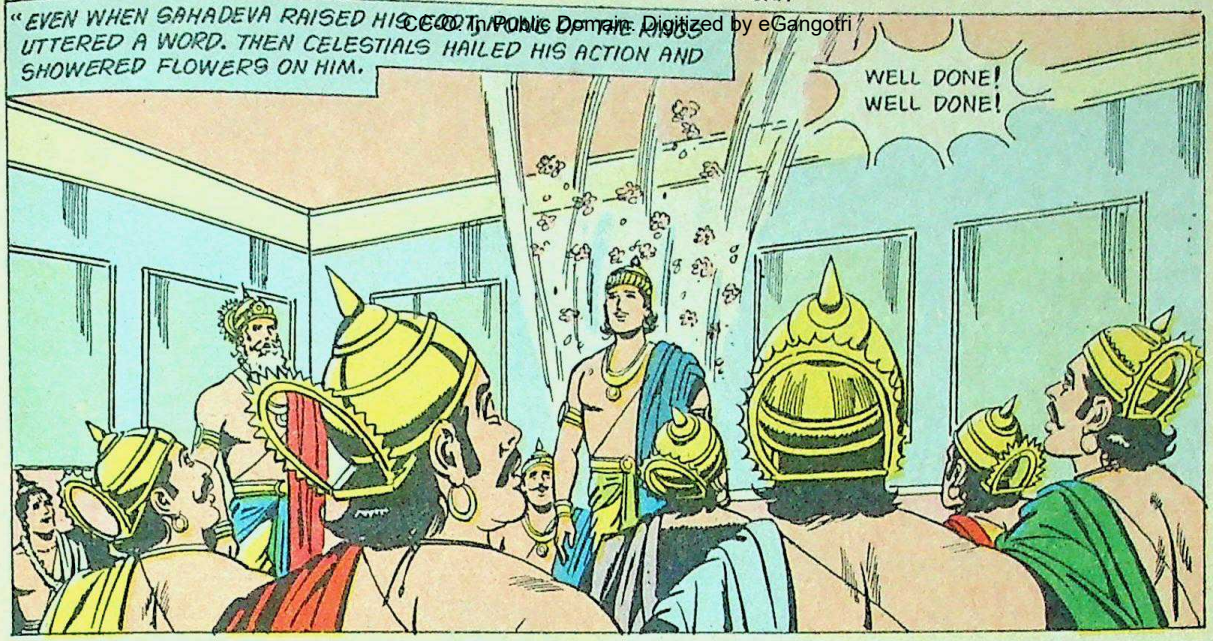

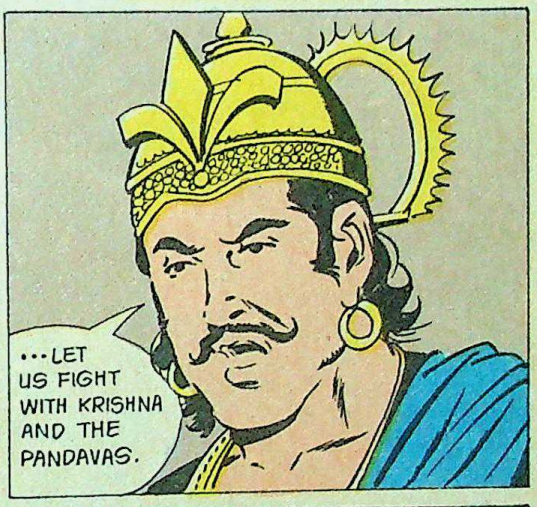

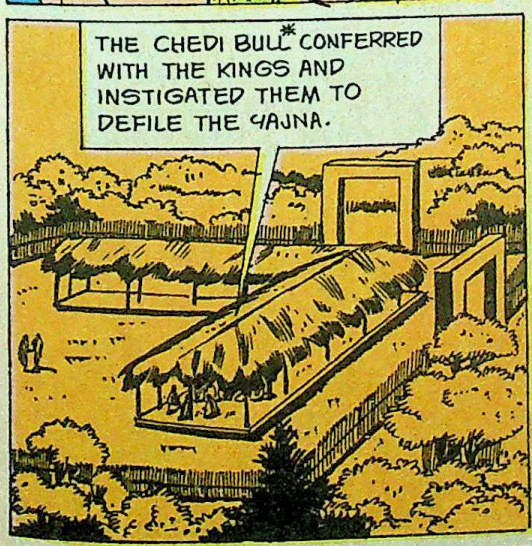

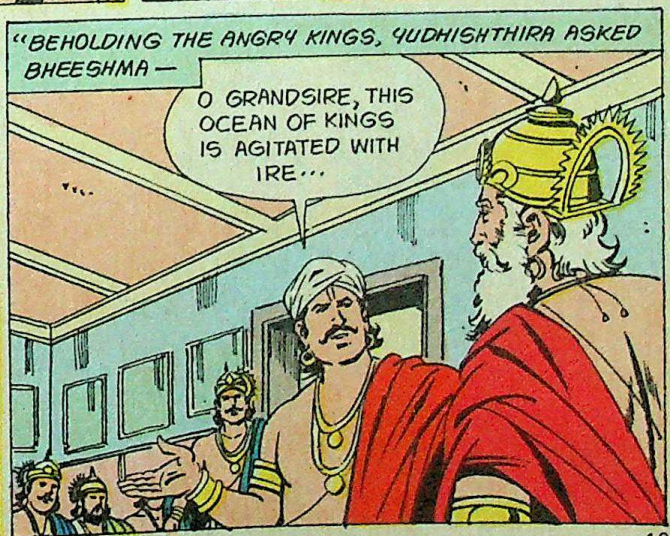

*SHISHUPALA

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* THE GOD OF DEATH.

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SO HOW DOES ONE WHO HAS KILLED A WOMAN* AND A COW† BECOME WORTHY OF WORSHIP?

YOU ARE EULOGISED AS WISE, O BHEESHMA, BUT YOUR CELIBACY HAS BEEN IN VAIN. YOU OBSERVE IT EITHER TO NURTURE YOUR VANITY OR TO CONCEAL YOUR IMPOTENCE.

HEARING THOSE RUDE WORDS THE VALOROUS BHEEMA WAS SEIZED WITH ANGER. BLOOD DESCENDED INTO HIS EYES. HE RUSHED AT SHISHUPALA LIKE DEATH INCARNATE.

"THE RAGING BHEEMA WAS HELD IN CHECK BY THE MIGHTY-ARMED BHEESHMA.

"CONFIDENT OF HIS OWN MIGHT, SHISHUPALA LAUGHED AND SAID—

RELEASE HIM, O BHEESHMA, LET THE KINGS WITNESS HIM PERISH LIKE A MOTH IN THE FIRE OF MY GLORY.

* DEMONESS POOTANA. † KRISHNA HAD KILLED AN ASURA NAMED DHENUKA WHO WAS IN THE GUISE OF A BULL.

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BEHOLDING HIS UNNATURAL APPEARANCE THE TERRIFIED PARENTS DECIDED TO ABANDON THE CHILD.

THEN AN INCORPOREAL VOICE SAID:

YOUR SON WILL ACQUIRE GLORY AND GREAT STRENGTH. HAVE NO FEAR AND TAKE CARE OF HIM.

O KING, HE WILL NOT DIE OF YOUR EFFORTS. THE MOMENT OF HIS DEATH HAS NOT YET ARRIVED. BUT HIS DESTROYER HAS ALSO BEEN BORN.

I WISH TO HEAR WHO WILL SLAY MY SON.

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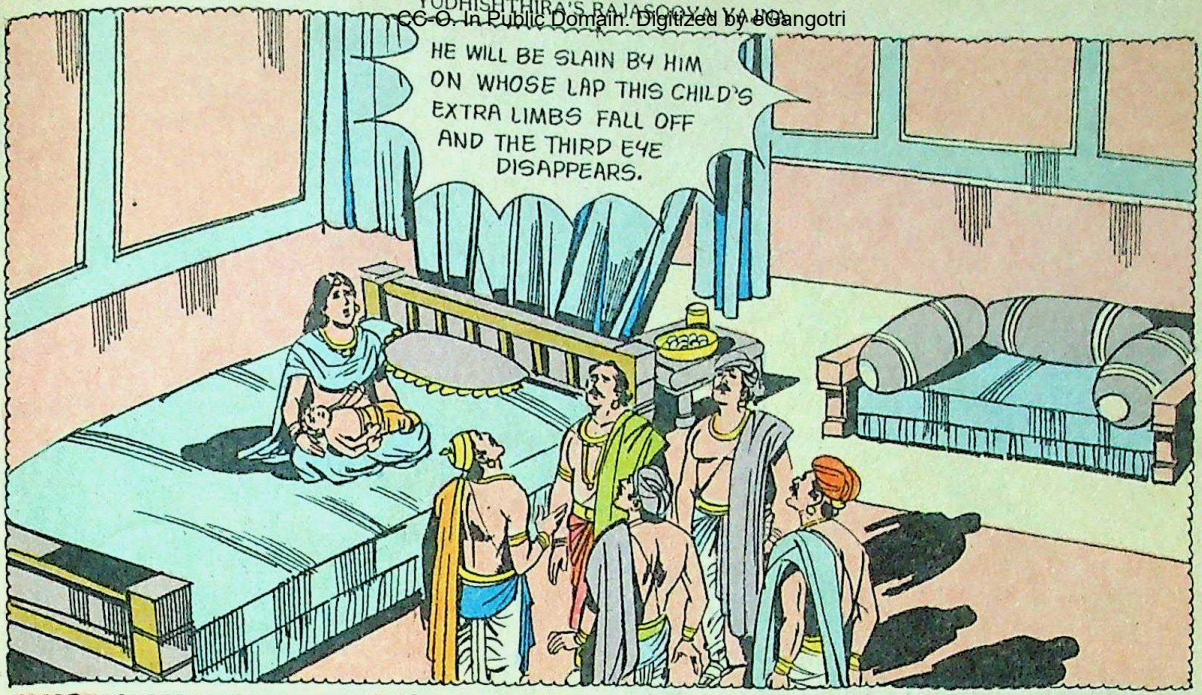

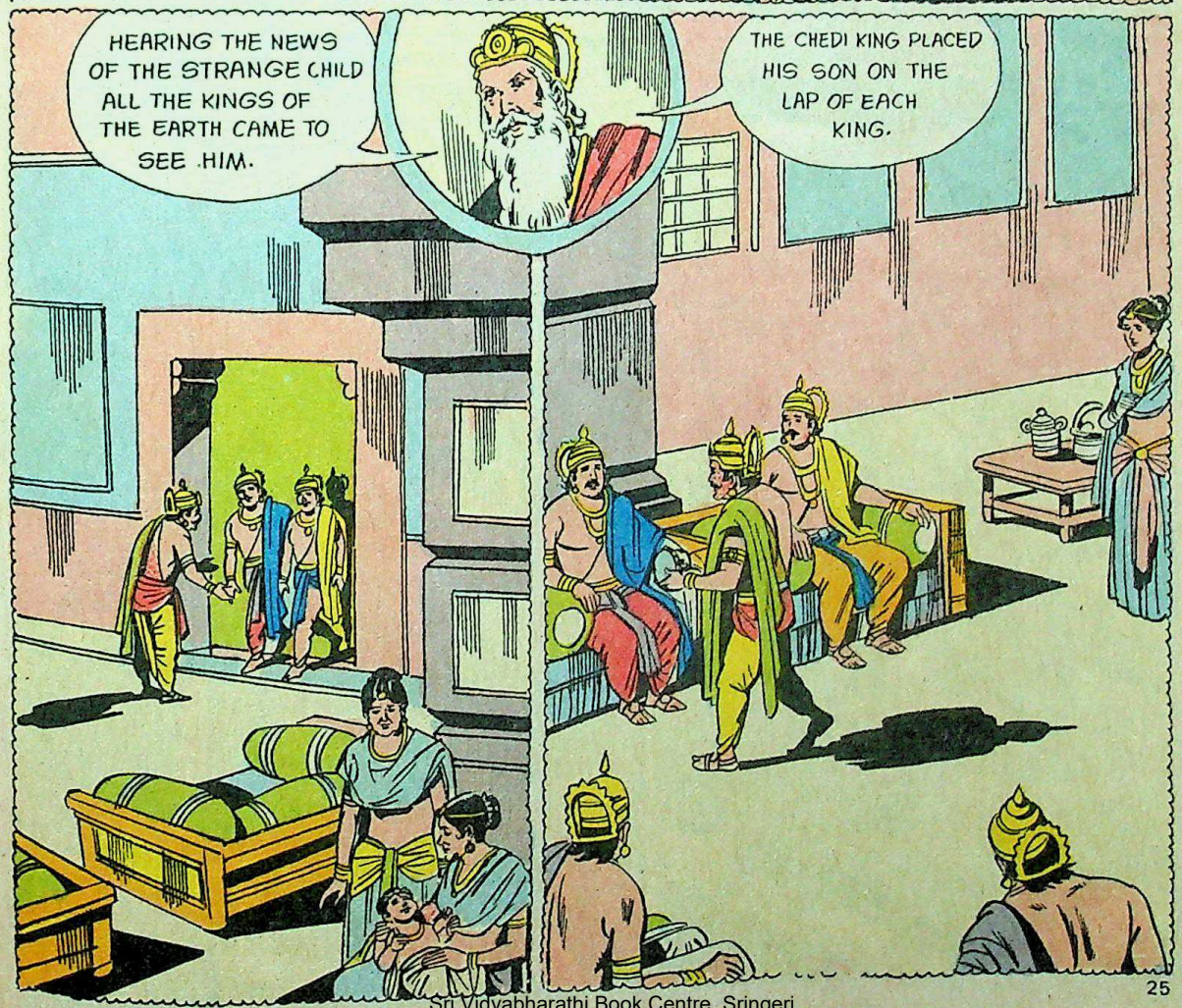

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* HARI = KRISHNA.

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+ HORSE SACRIFICE.

* THE PRINCIPAL QUEEN OF KRISHNA.

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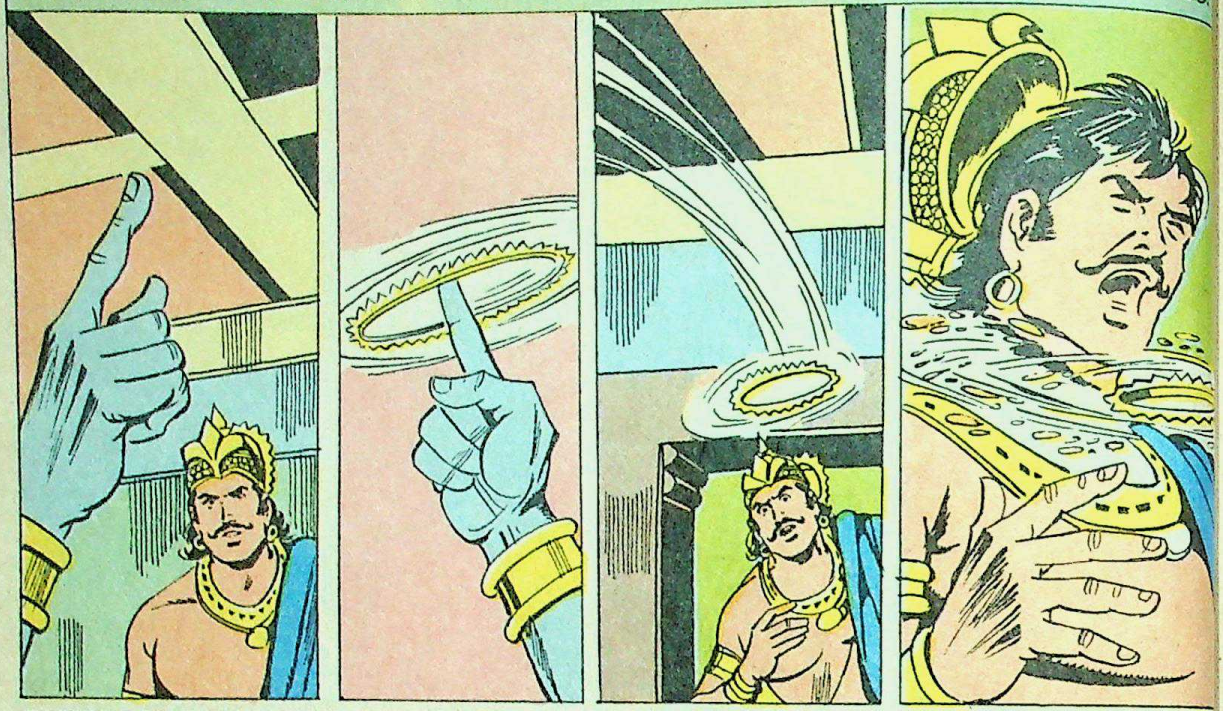
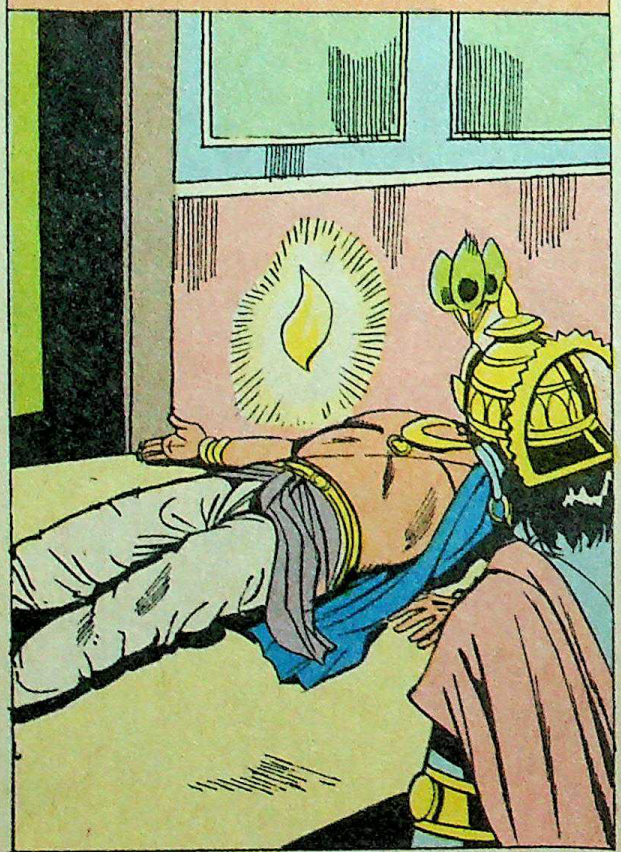
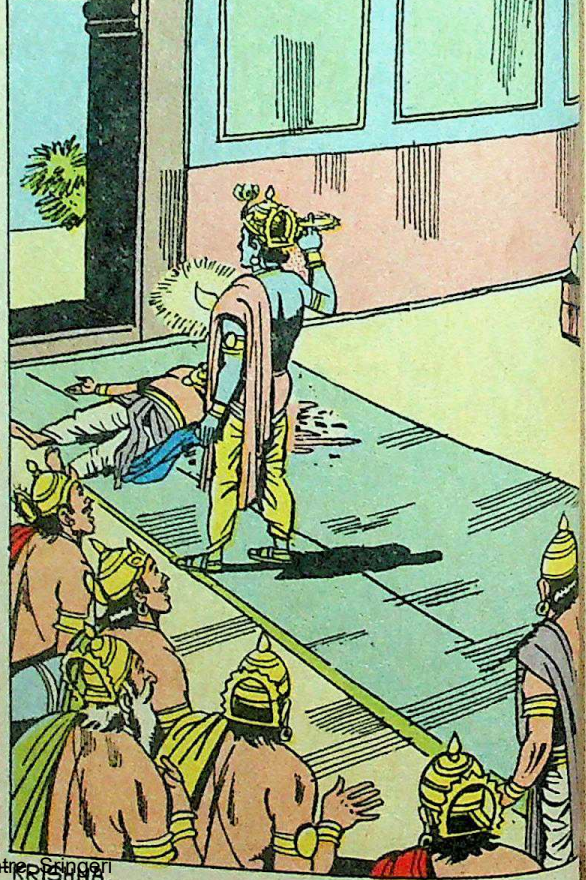
"WHILE SHISHUPALA WAS UTTERING THESE WORDS, LORD VAASUDEVA BEHEADED HIM WITH HIS DISCUS.



"SHISHUPALA FELL TO THE GROUND LIKE A MOUNTAIN UPROOTED BY VAJRA*. A BRILLIANT LIGHT EMERGED FROM HIS BODY AND...



"... THEN IT MERGED WITH THE BODY OF PURUSHOTTAMA ⊕.



* THE WEAPON OF INDRA.

⊕ THE LORD OF MEN, i.e. KRISHNA.

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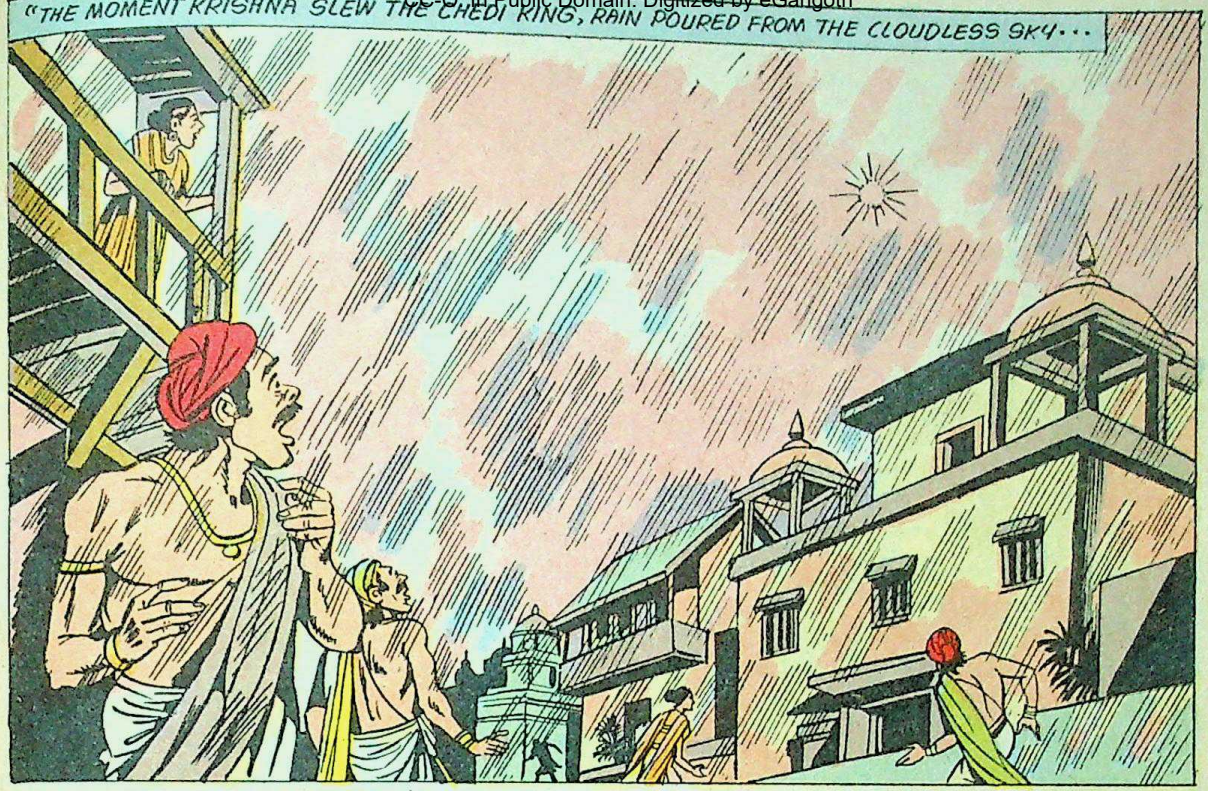

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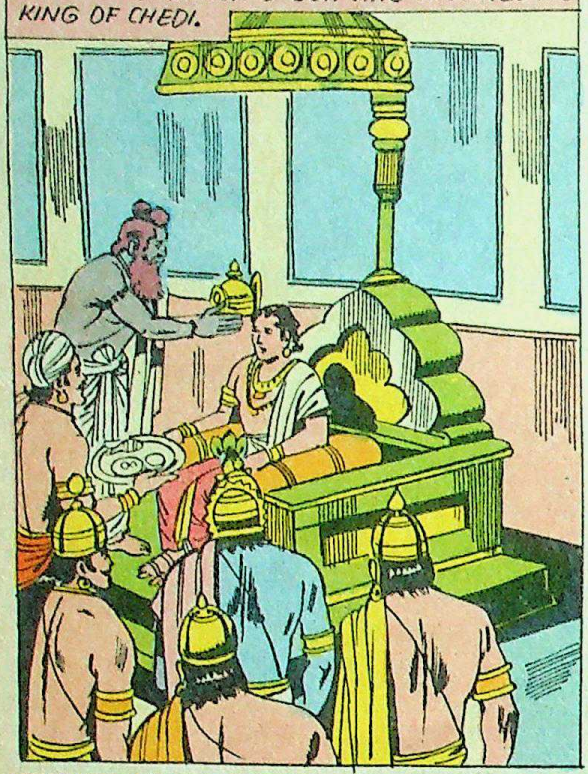
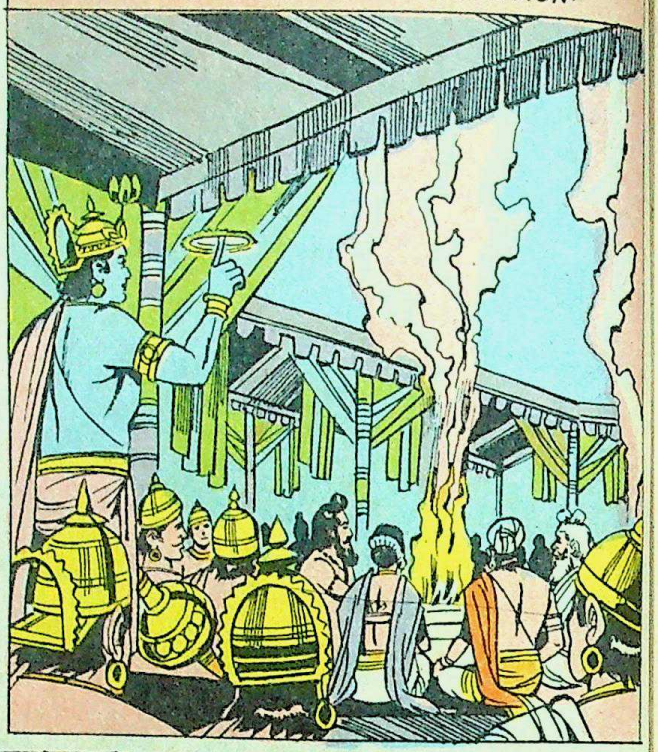
"YUDHISHTHIRA ASKED HIS [illegible] TO PERFORM THE LAST RITES OF SHISHUPALA. THEN SHISHUPALA'S SON WAS CROWNED THE KING OF CHEDI.



YAJNA. THUS YUDHISHTHIRA COMPLETED THE GREAT RAJASOOYA YAJNA. THE MIGHTY ARMED KRISHNA BEARING THE CONCH, THE DISCUS AND THE MACE, PROTECTED THE YAJNA TILL ITS CONCLUSION.



WHEN THE RAJASOOYA YAJNA WAS COMPLETED ALL THE KINGS DEPARTED FOR THEIR KINGDOMS. KRISHNA WENT TO DWARAKA. ONLY DURYODHANA AND SHAKUNI CONTINUED TO STAY AT INDRAPRASTHA FOR SOME MORE TIME.

THUS ENDS THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL OF VYASA'S ITHASA, THE MAHABHARATA.

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Mahabharata - 18

INDRAPRASTHA LOST

O KING JANAMEJAYA, DURYODHANA AND SHAKUNI STAYED AT INDRAPRASTHA FOR SEVERAL DAYS AFTER THE COMPLETION OF YUDHISHTHIRA'S RAJASOOYA YAJNA.

DURING HIS STAY DURYODHANA SAW VARIOUS PARTS OF THE MAGNIFICENT MANSION WHICH THE ASURA MAYA HAD BUILT FOR YUDHISHTHIRA.

"IN THAT MANSION DURYODHANA BEHELD WONDROUS OBJECTS WHICH HE HAD NEVER SEEN IN HIS OWN CAPITAL HASTINAPURA.

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"WHILE ON THE ROUNDS OF THE PALACE, DURYODHANA MISTOOK A POLISHED CRYSTAL FLOOR FOR A LAKE...

"...AND TUCKED UP HIS GARMENTS IN ORDER NOT TO MAKE THEM WET".

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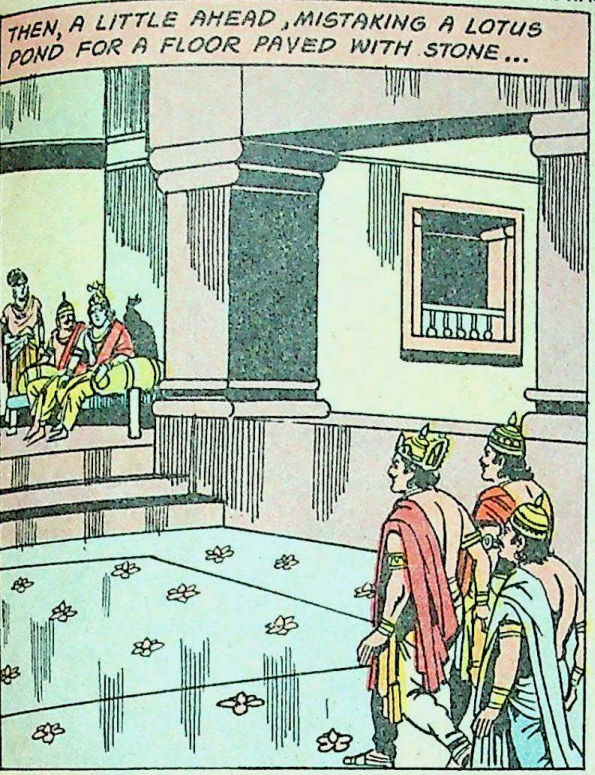

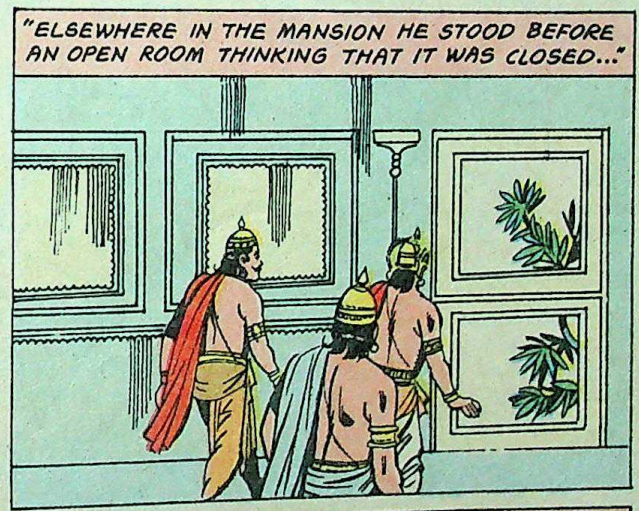

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DURYODHANA RETURNED TO HASTINAPURA FILLED WITH ENVY FOR THE FABULOUS WEALTH OF THE PANDAVAS AND SMARTING UNDER THE HUMILIATION HE SUFFERED AT INDRA-PRASTHA.

"THE PROSPERITY OF THE PANDAVAS FURTHER VITIATED THE MIND OF DURYODHANA.

O UNCLE, BEHOLDING THE GLORIOUS WEALTH OF THE PANDAVAS, I AM BURNING WITH RESENTMENT.

WHO AMONG THE MIGHTY WILL TOLERATE AN ENEMY PROSPERING?

GIVE ME YOUR CONSENT. I WILL SUBDUE THE PANDAVAS WITH THE HELP OF OUR VALIANT ALLIES.

THEN SHAKUNI SAID —

THE PANDAVAS, THEIR ALLIES, KRISHNA AND DRUPADA, AND THEIR SONS CANNOT BE VANQUISHED EVEN BY THE CELESTIALS.

BUT O PRINCE, I KNOW A STRATAGEM TO OBTAIN THE IMMENSE RICHES POSSESSED BY YUDHISHTHIRA.

O UNCLE, TELL ME THAT STRATAGEM. I WANT TO SUBDUE YUDHISHTHIRA WITHOUT ENDANGERING MY KIN.

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YUDHISHTHIRA IS VERY FOND OF GAMBLING BUT HE IS NOT ADEPT AT IT. WHEN INVITED, HE NEVER REFUSES TO PLAY.

O KAURAVA, THERE IS NO GAMBLER IN THE THREE WORLDS MORE SKILLED THAN ME...

INVITE YUDHISHTHIRA TO A GAME OF DICE. I SHALL WIN THEIR KINGDOM AND ITS GLITTERING WEALTH FOR YOU.

AFTER HATCHING THIS PLOT, SHAKUNI APPROACHED KING DHRITARASHTRA AND SAID —

DURYODHANA HAS GROWN WEAK AND PALE. HIS CONDITION EVOKES PITY. WHY DON'T YOU ENQUIRE OF HIM THE CAUSE OF HIS AILMENT?

THE ANXIOUS DHRITARASHTRA WENT TO MEET HIS SON.

TELL ME WHAT TROUBLES YOU, SON?

FATHER, AFTER SEEING THE FABULOUS RICHES OF YUDHISHTHIRA, I HAVE LOST MY APPETITE AND HAVE BECOME WEAK...

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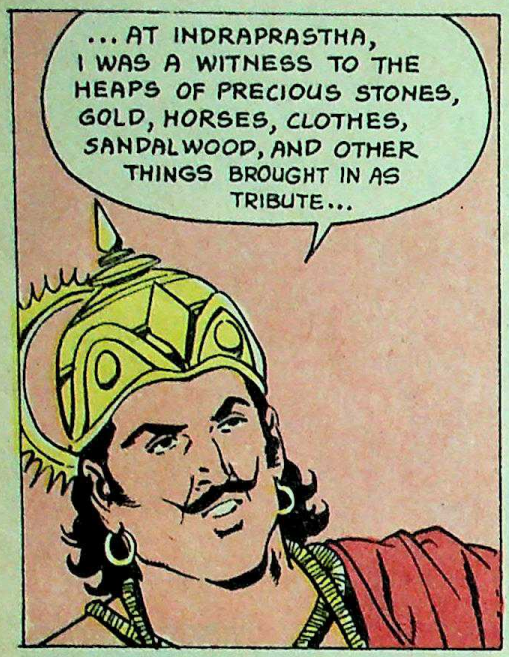

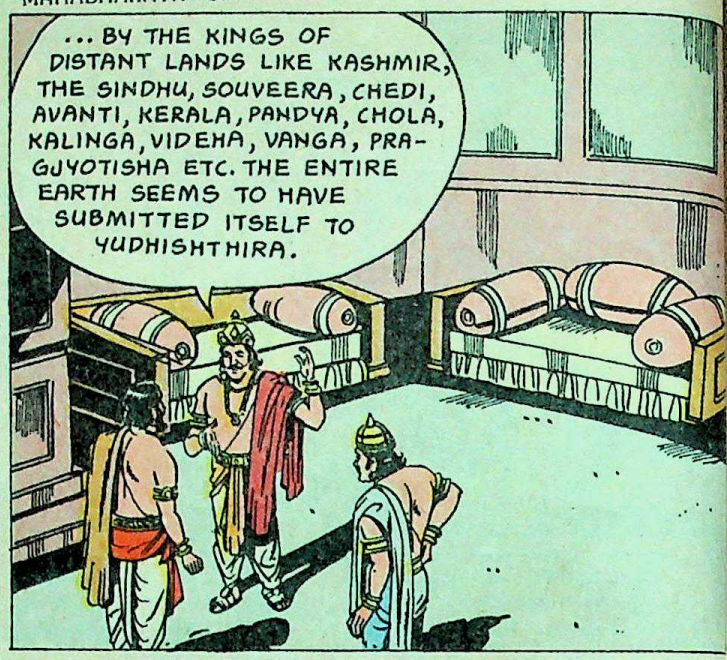

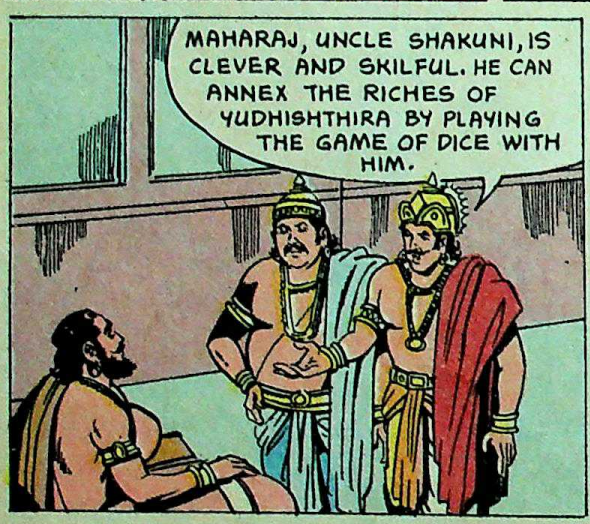

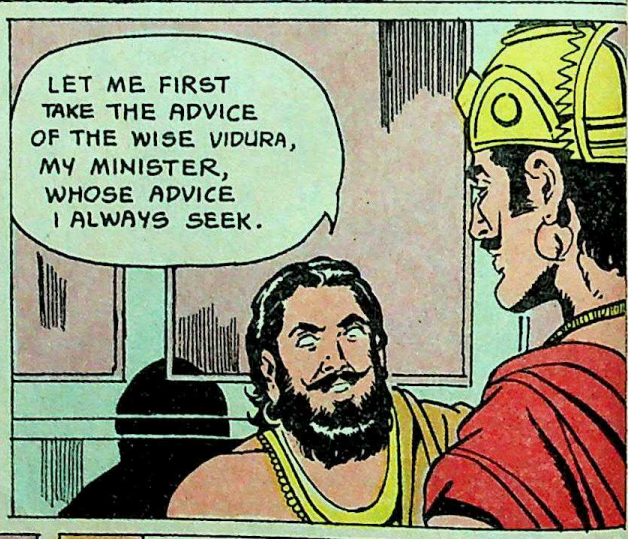

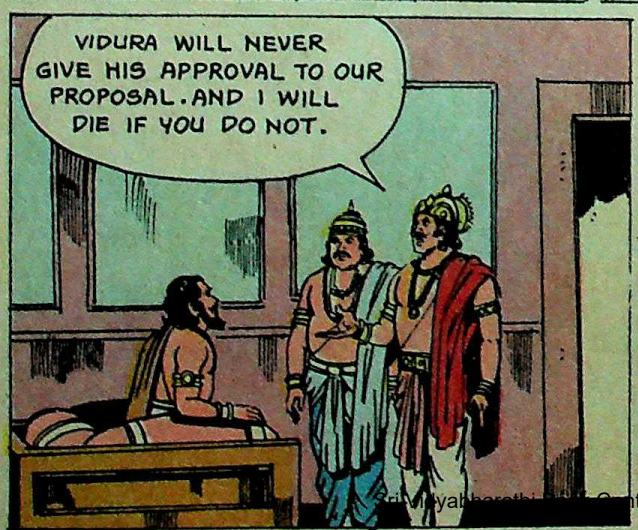

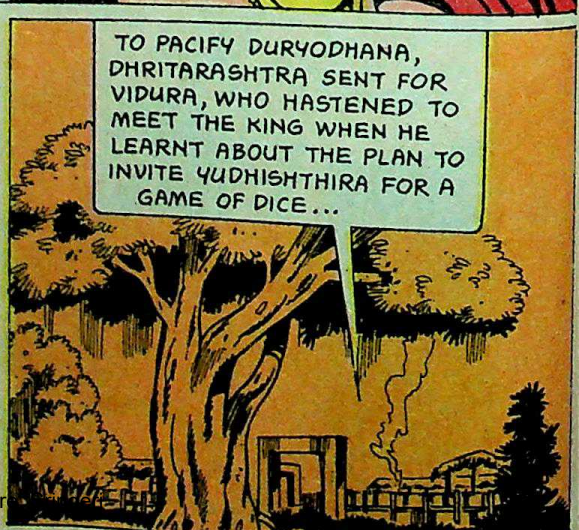

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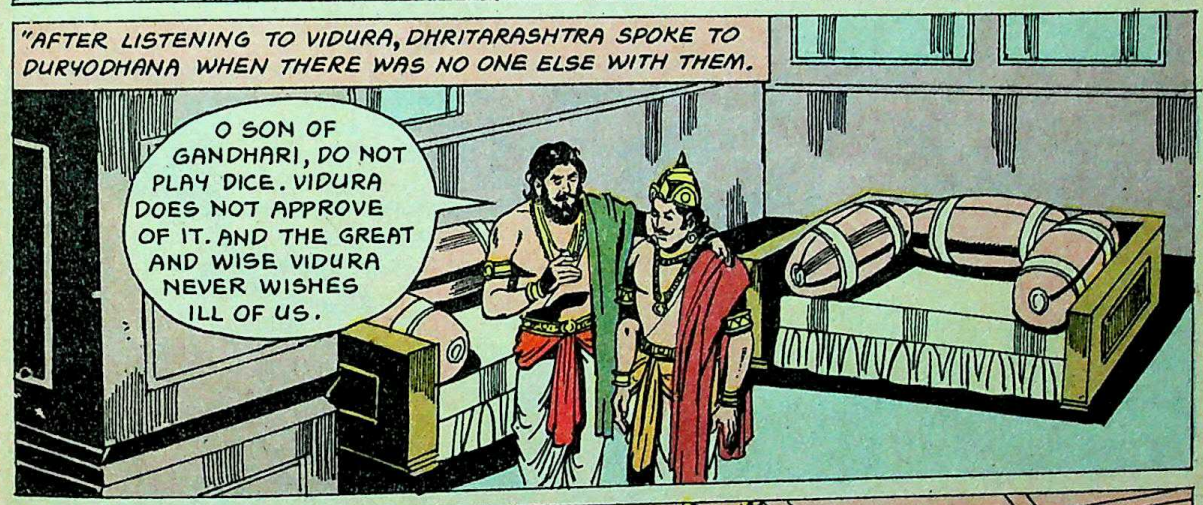

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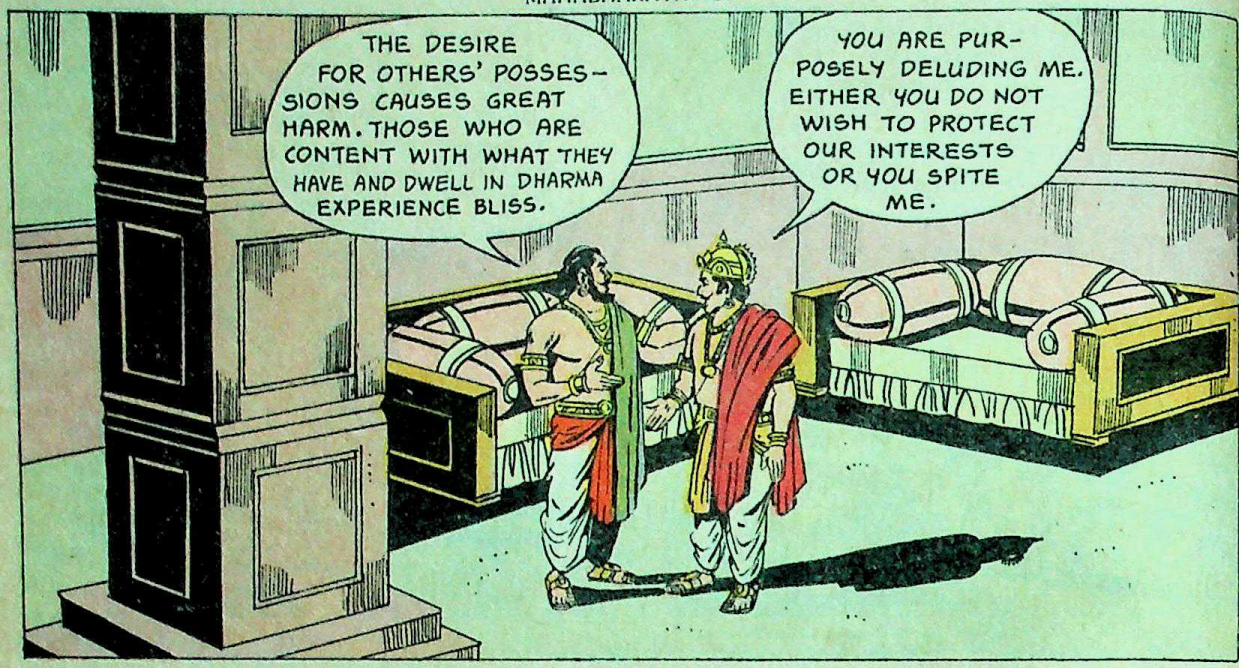

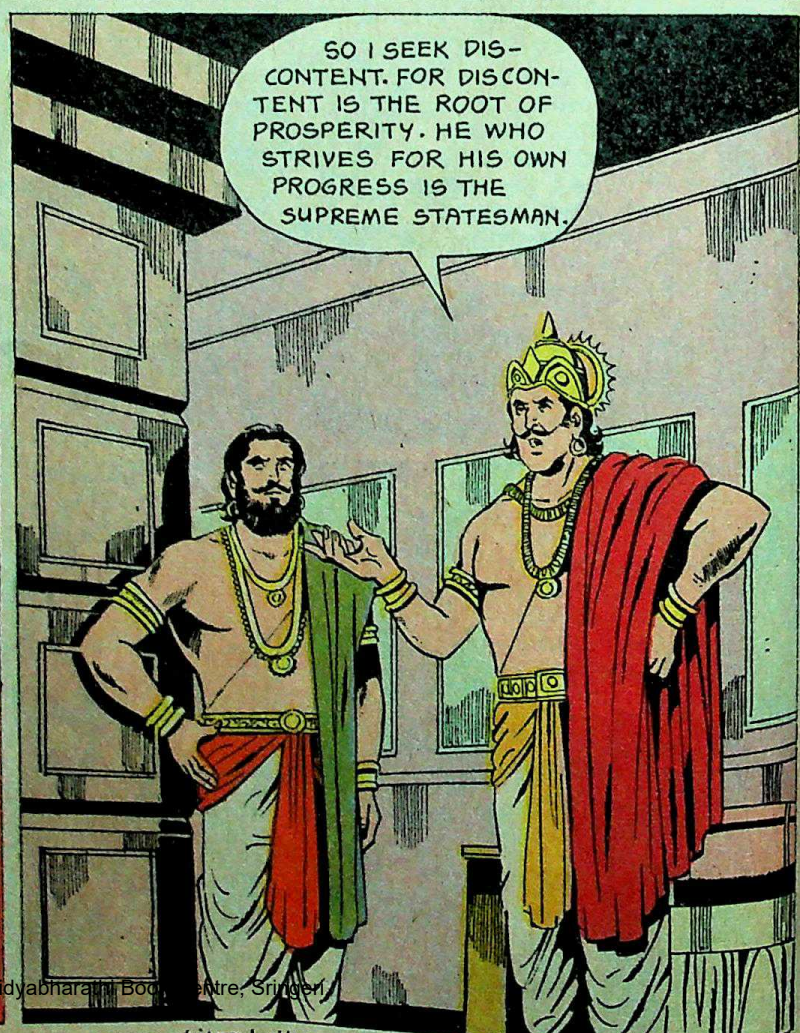

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THUS INSTRUCTED BY DHRITARASHTRA, VIDURA WENT TO THE PANDAVAS AND SAID—

YUDHISHTHIRA, GAMBLING IS THE ROOT CAUSE OF MISFORTUNE AND I MADE AN EFFORT TO PREVENT IT. BUT STILL THE KING HAS SENT ME TO INVITE YOU. DO WHAT YOU CONSIDER PROPER.

I DO NOT WISH TO DISOBEY KING DHRITARASHTRA WHO IS LIKE A FATHER TO ME. AND ONCE CALLED, I DO NOT TURN BACK.

"ON THE FOLLOWING DAY, THE PANDAVAS, WITH DRAUPADI AND OTHER COMPANIONS, REACHED HASTINAPURA.

"NEXT MORNING AFTER PERFORMING THEIR DAILY RELIGIOUS RITES THE PANDAVAS WENT TO THE HALL OF GAMBLING, WHERE SHAKUNI ADDRESSED YUDHISHTHIRA—

O KING, LET US SEE THE STAKES.

O SHAKUNI, PLAYING DICE IS SINFUL.

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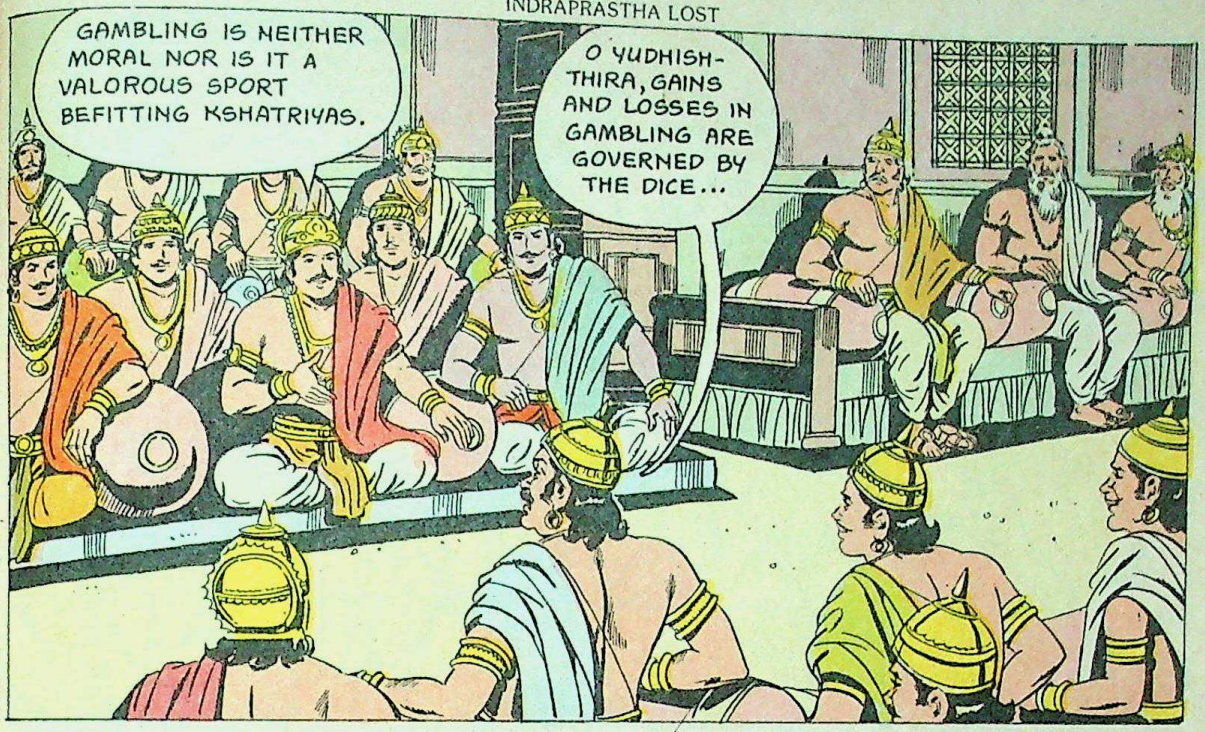

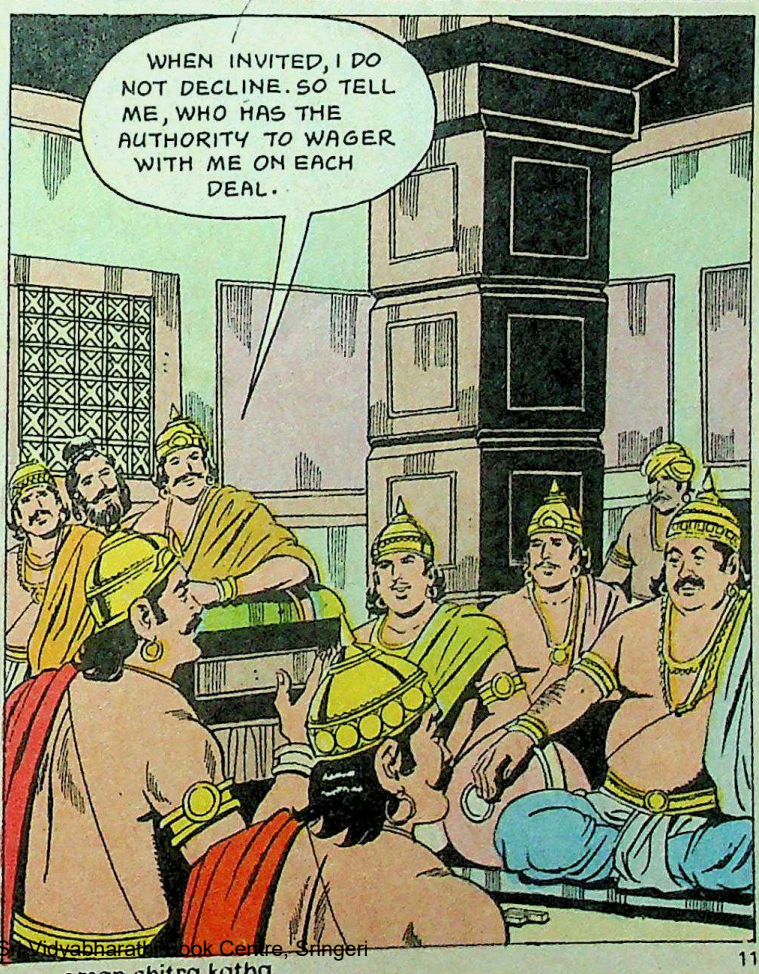

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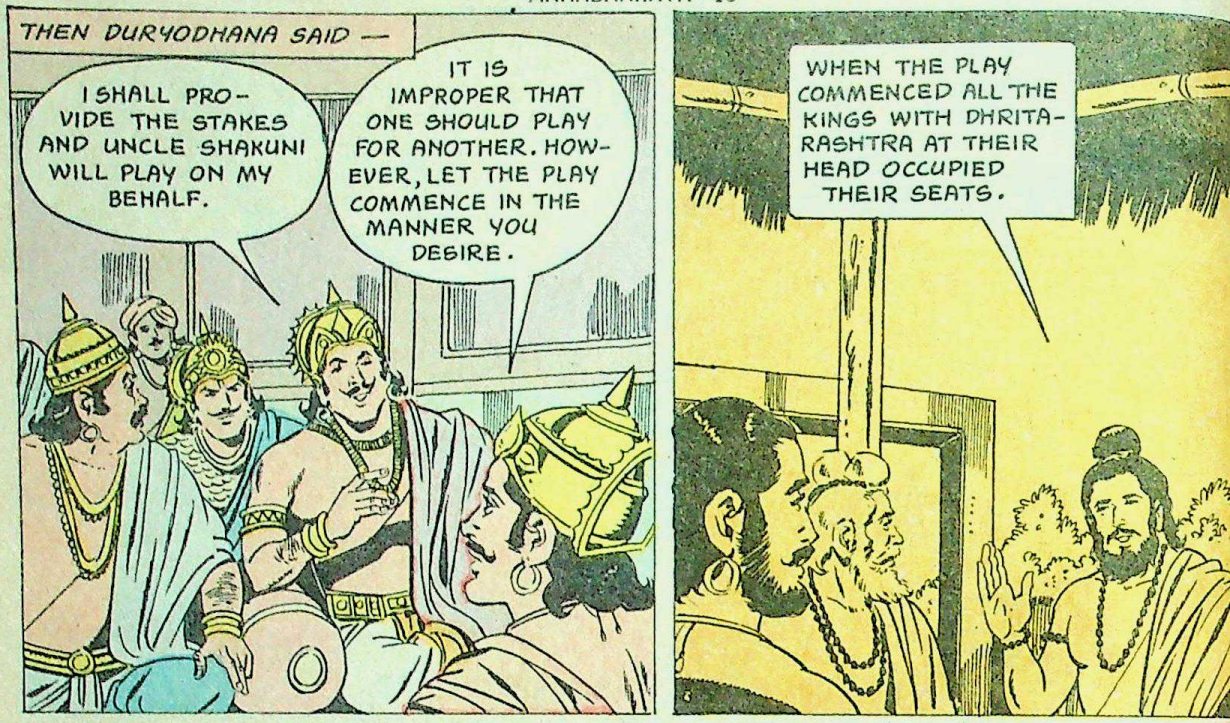

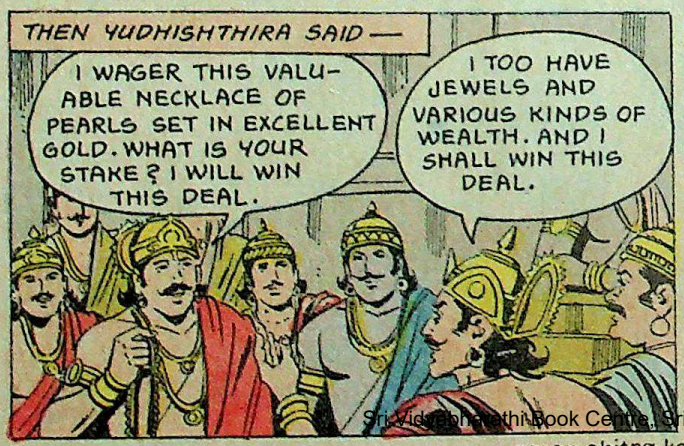

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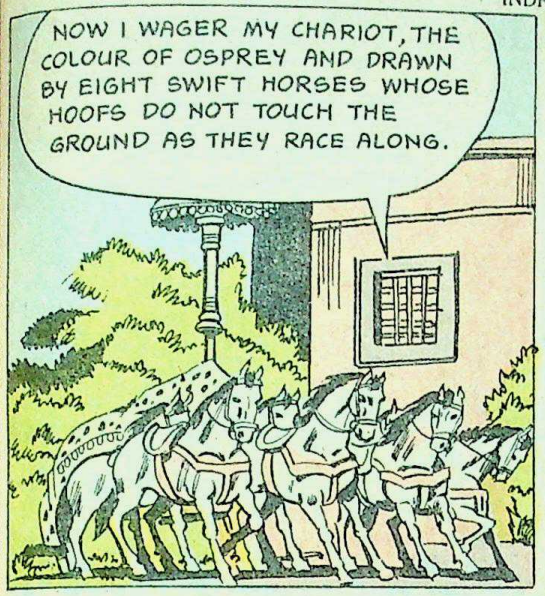

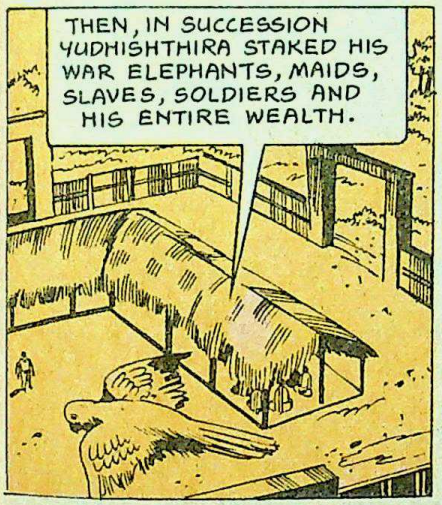

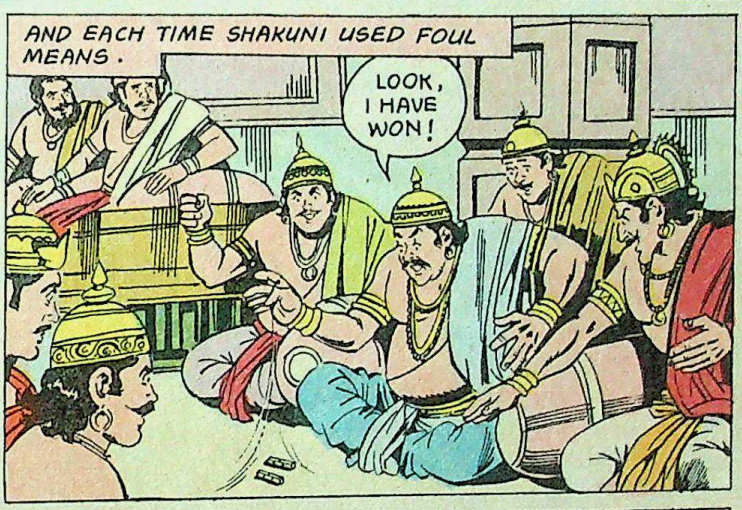

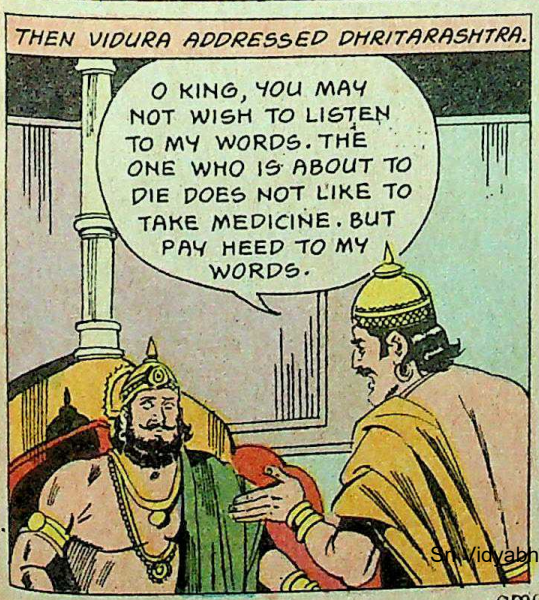

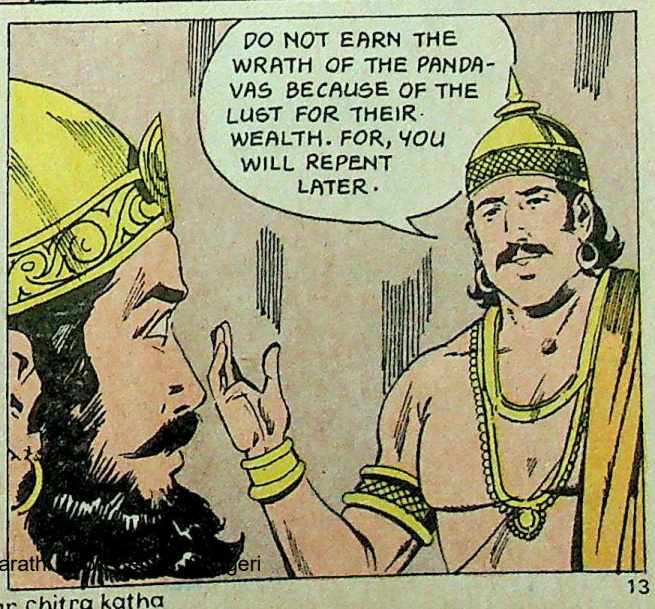

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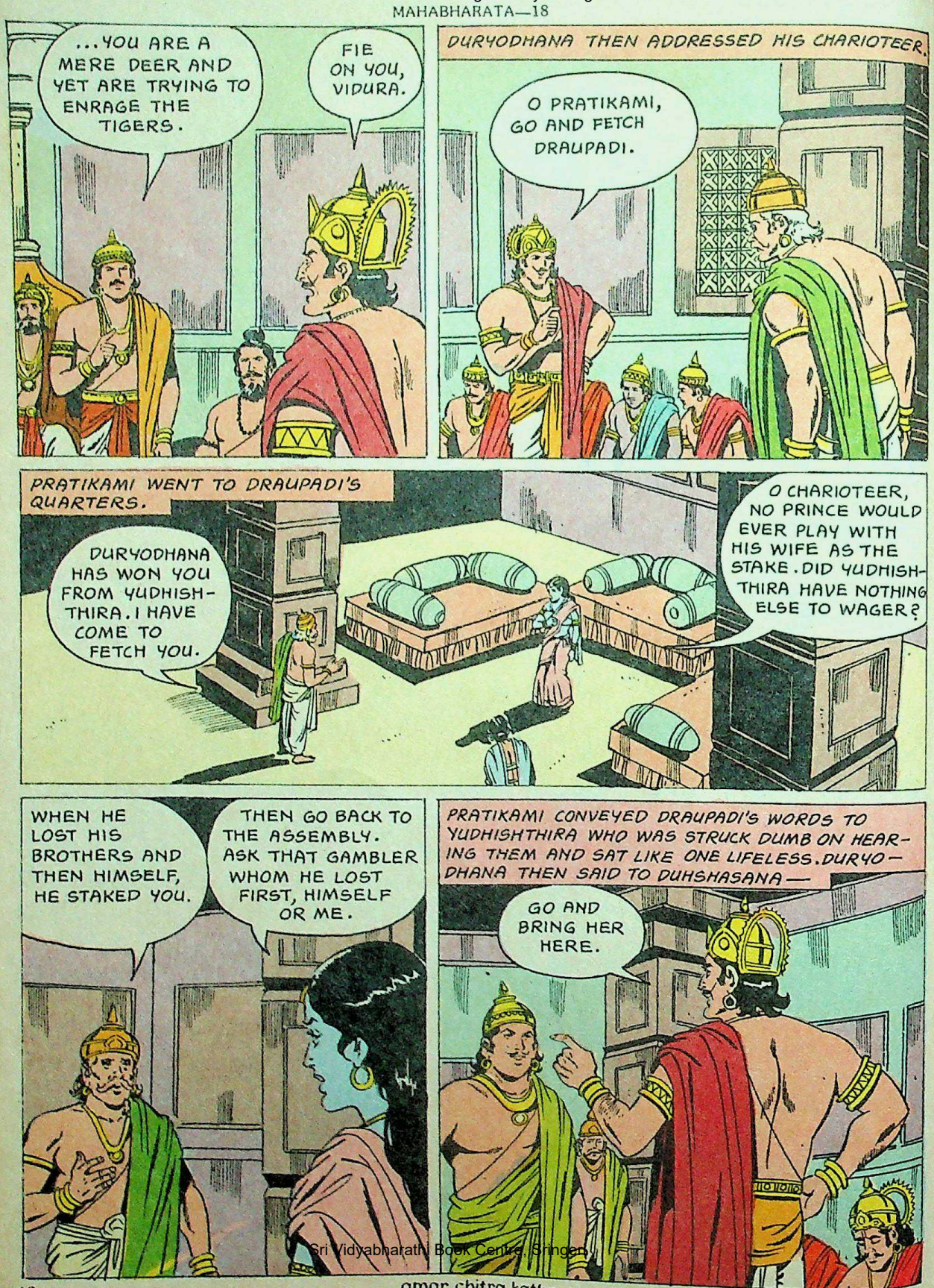

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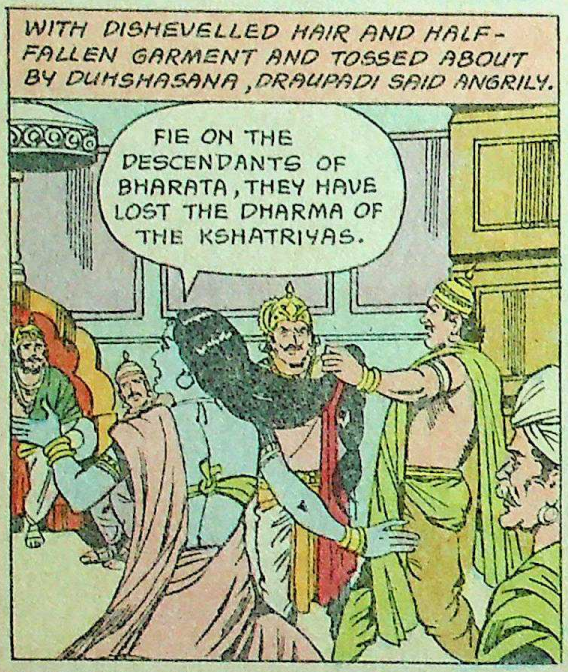

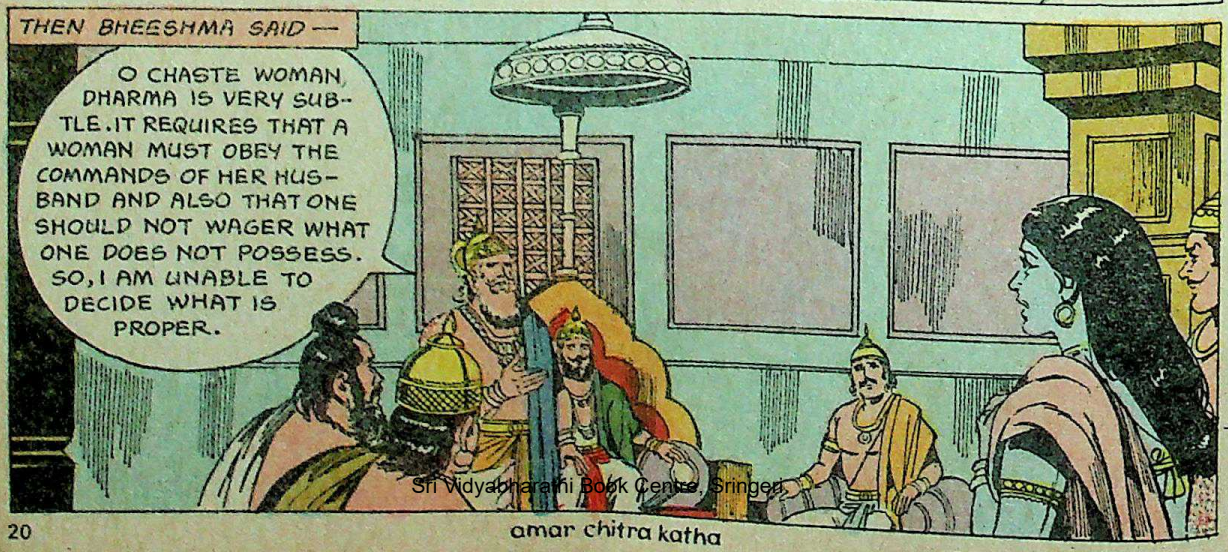

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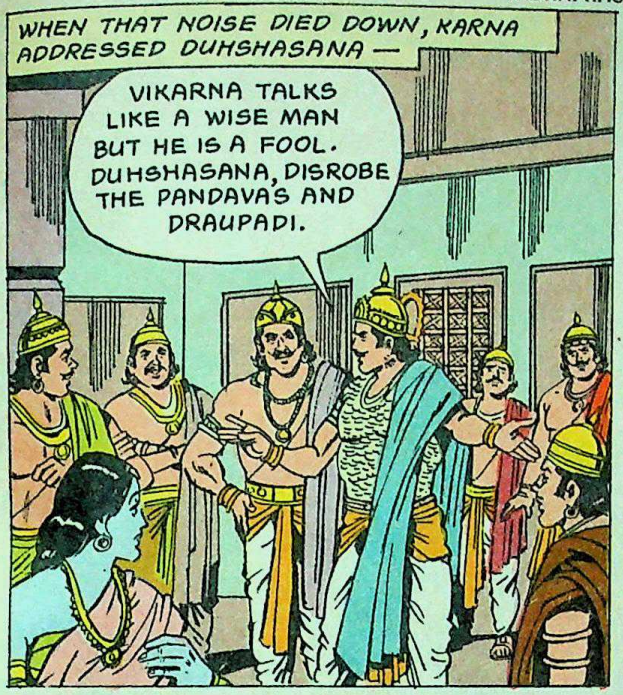

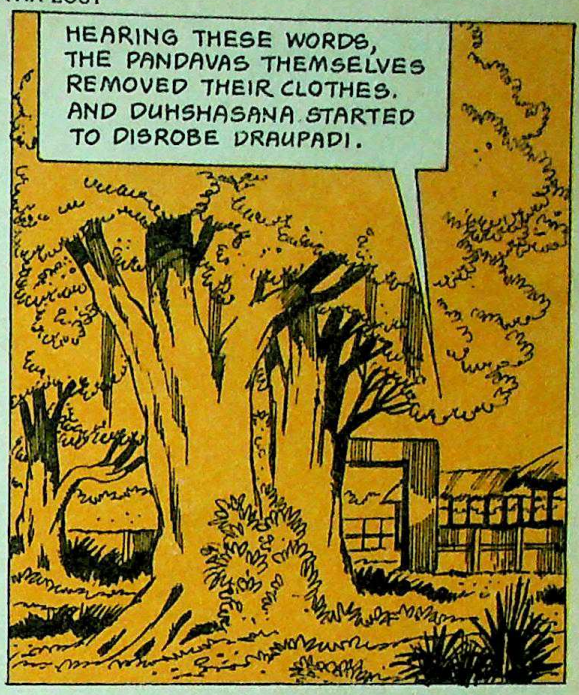

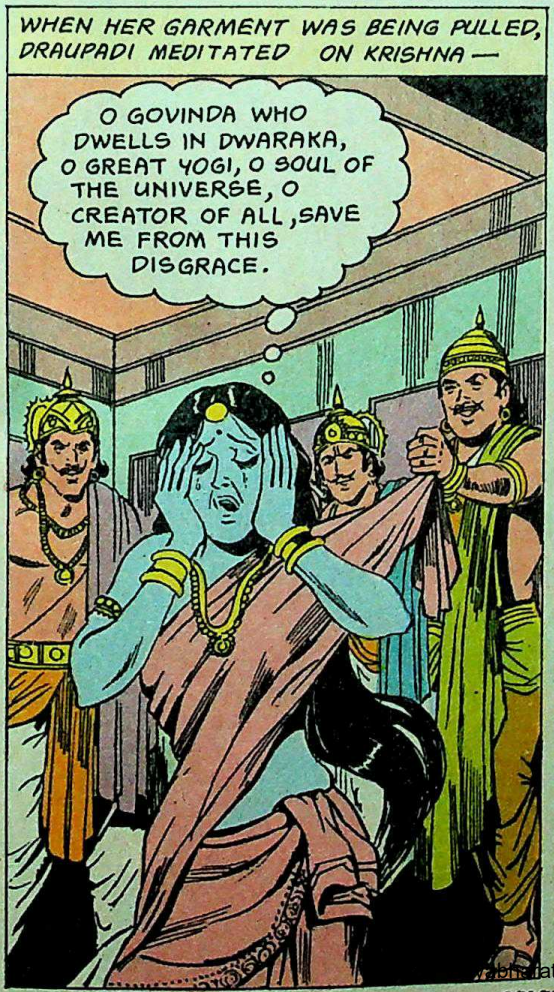

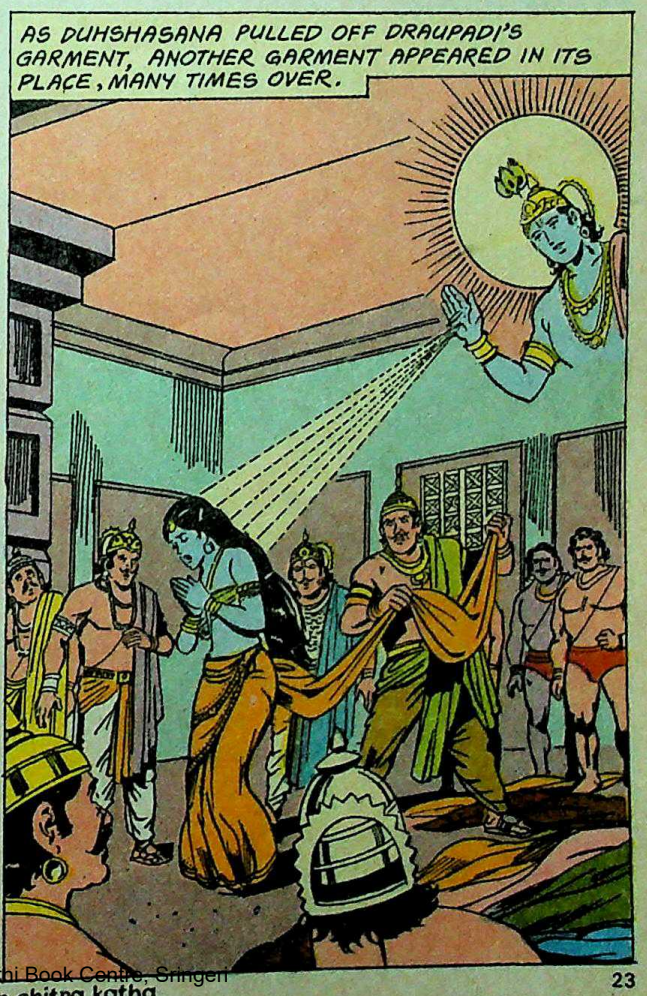

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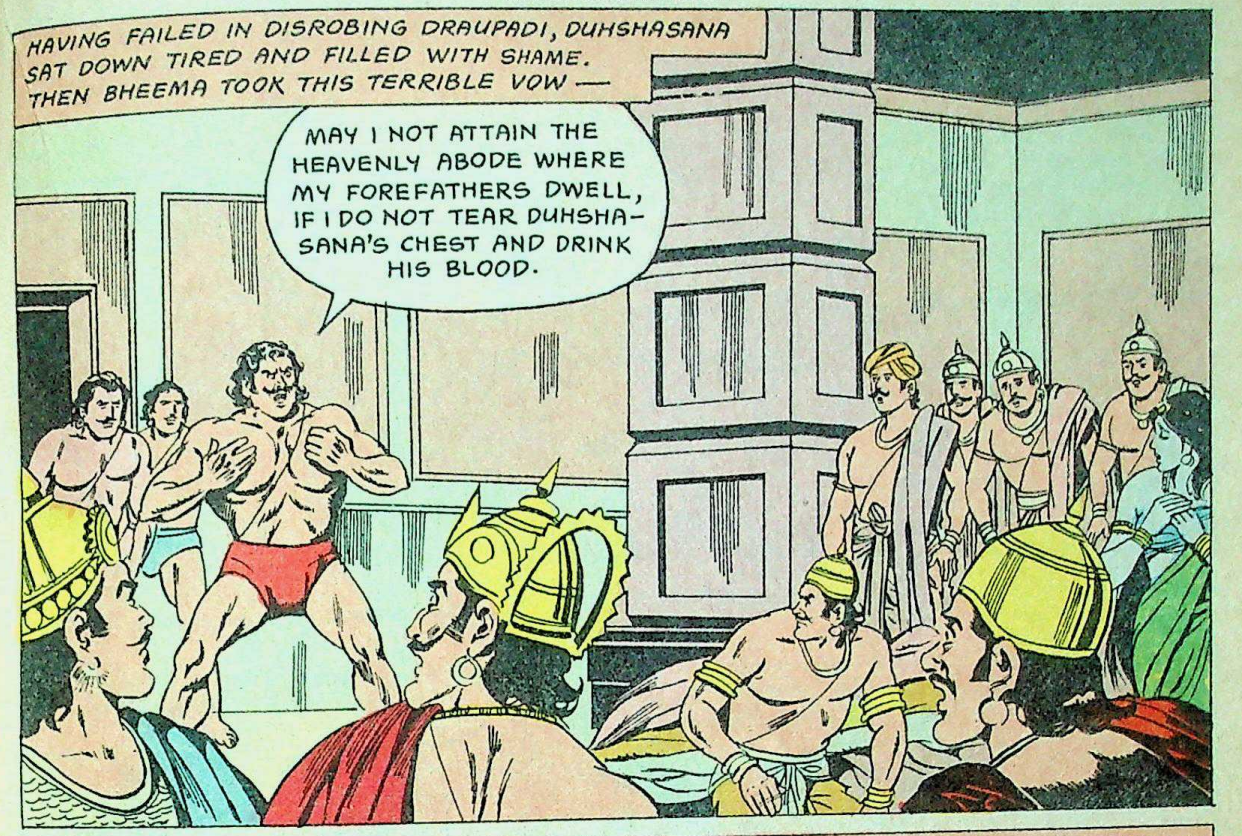

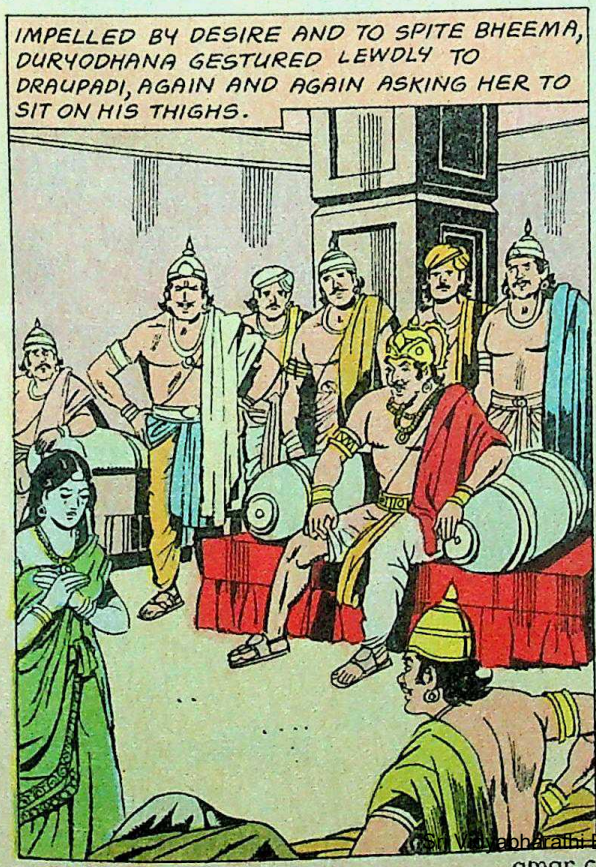

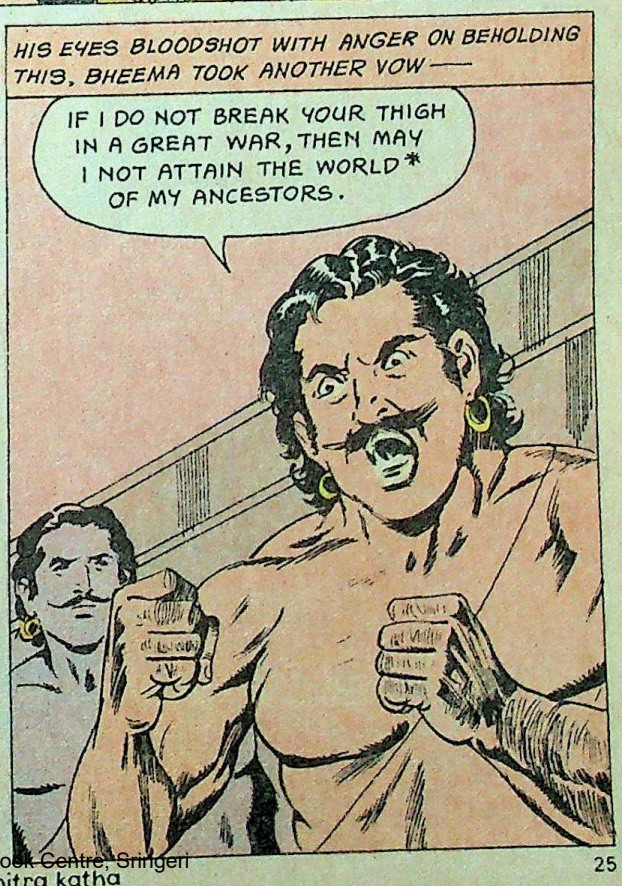

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TWO BOONS ARE NOT ENOUGH TO HONOUR A VIRTUOUS DAUGHTER-IN-LAW LIKE YOU. ASK A THIRD BOON.

O LORD, GREED IS THE CAUSE OF THE DESTRUCTION OF DHARMA. THEREFORE, I DO NOT DESIRE A THIRD BOON.

THEN DHRITARASHTRA SAID TO YUDHISHTHIRA—

O PRINCE WITHOUT AN ENEMY, PROCEED AND RULE YOUR KINGDOM UNHINDERED AND REMEMBER THE WORDS OF THIS OLD MAN...

THE VIRTUOUS DO NOT HARBOUR HOSTILITY. THEY NOTICE ONLY THE VIRTUES OF OTHERS AND NOT THEIR SHORTCOMINGS.

O SON, DISPEL THE MEMORY OF THE ILL-DEEDS OF DURYODHANA FROM YOUR HEART.

I SHALL DO YOUR BIDDING, SIRE.

WITH PLEASED HEARTS, THE PANDAVAS DEPARTED FOR INDRAPRASTHA.

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WHEN THE PANDAVAS LEFT, DUHSHASANA, AFFLICTED WITH GRIEF, WENT TO HIS BROTHER DURYODHANA AND SAID —

WHATEVER WE GAINED WITH GREAT EFFORT HAS ALL BEEN LOST BY THE OLD MAN.

THEN DURYODHANA WENT TO DHRITARASHTRA AND SAID —

THE PANDAVAS HAVE BEEN SEVERELY HUMILIATED BY US. THEY WILL NEVER FORGET HOW WE MOLESTED DRAUPADI.

WE WON THE GAME OF DICE BY TRICKERY IN GAMBLING AGAINST THE PANDAVAS. WE COULD NEVER WIN AGAINST THEM BY ANY OTHER MEANS. LET US INVITE THEM ONCE AGAIN TO A GAME OF DICE. WHOEVER LOSES NOW WILL BE BANISHED TO THE FOREST FOR TWELVE YEARS...

...AND WILL HAVE TO LIVE THE THIRTEENTH YEAR INCOGNITO. IF DISCOVERED DURING THIS YEAR THE LOSERS WILL LIVE IN THE FOREST FOR ANOTHER TWELVE YEARS.

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WHEN YUDHISHTHIRA ACCEPTED THE TERMS, SHAKUNI PLAYED THE DICE AND SAID.

LO, I HAVE WON!

DUHSHASANA DANCED FOR JOY WHEN HE SAW THE VANQUISHED PANDAVAS WEARING DEERSKINS AS UPPER GARMENTS.

DURYODHANA IMITATED THE LEONINE WALK OF BHEEMA TO MOCK HIM. THEN BHEEMA SAID —

ARJUNA WILL KILL KARNA AND SAHA-DEVA WILL KILL THE WILY SHAKUNI.

I WILL KILL DURYODHANA WITH MY MACE AND WILL CRUSH HIS HEAD ON EARTH WITH MY FOOT.

IF OUR KINGDOM IS NOT RETURNED TO US RESPECTFULLY AFTER THIRTEEN YEARS I WILL SURELY ACCOMPLISH MY VOW.

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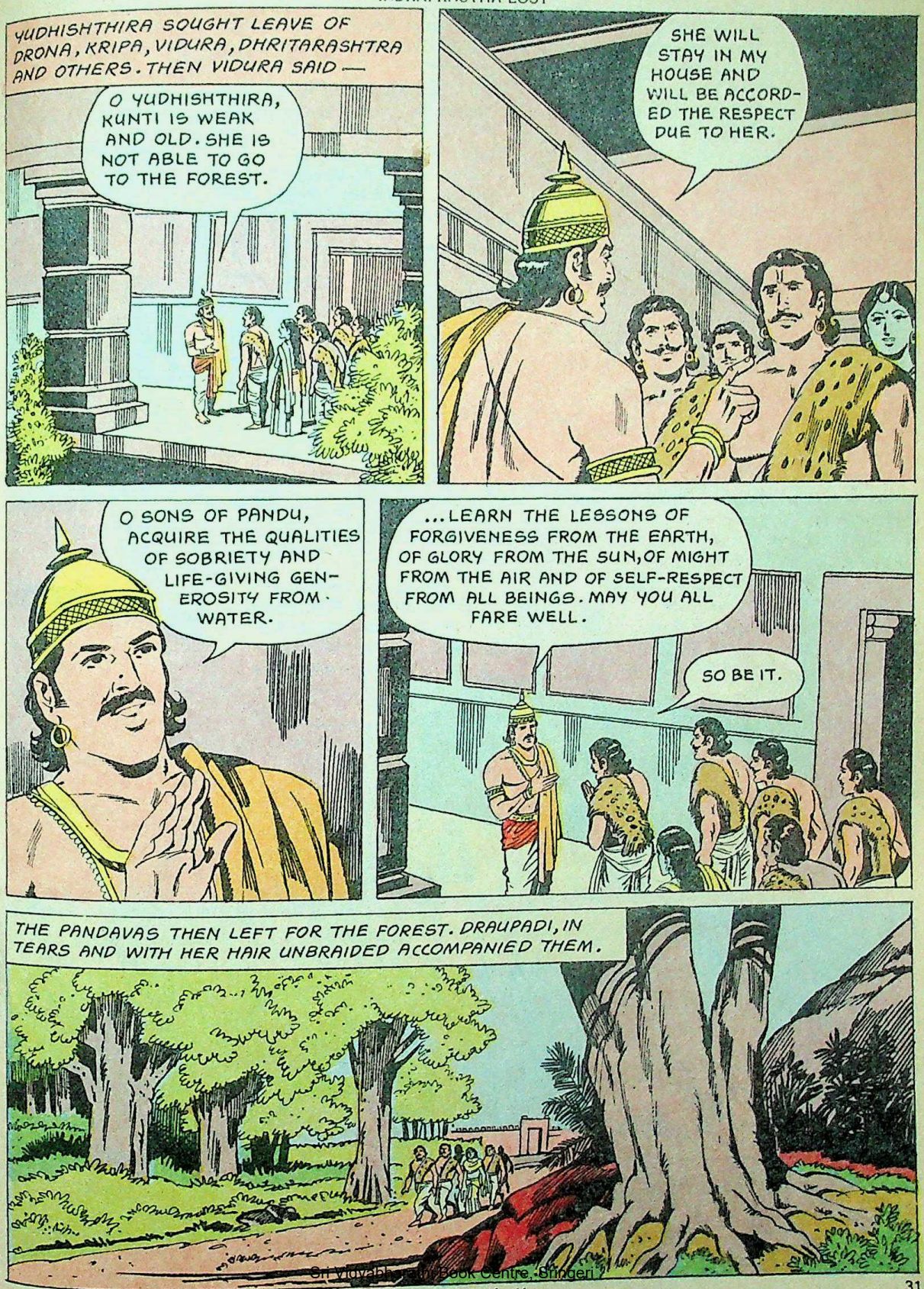

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AT THAT MOMENT NARADA, SURROUNDED BY OTHER SAGES, APPEARED IN THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KAURAVAS AND MADE THE TERRIBLE DECLARATION —

IN THE FOURTEENTH YEAR FROM NOW, DESTRUCTION OF THE KURU RACE WILL BE CAUSED BY THE SINS OF DURYODHANA AND THE VALOUR OF BHEEMA.

SAYING THIS, NARADA VANISHED. THEN DURYODHANA, KARNA AND SHAKUNI ACKNOWLEDGED DRONA AS THEIR ISLAND OF REFUGE IN THE SEA OF THEIR FEAR AND DEDICATED THEIR KINGDOM TO HIM.

DRONA SAID —

SINCE YOU HAVE COME TO ME FOR REFUGE, I SHALL NOT ABANDON YOU. I SHALL PROTECT YOU TO THE BEST OF MY MIGHT.

THUS ENDS THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL OF VYASA'S ITIHASA, THE MAHABHARATA.

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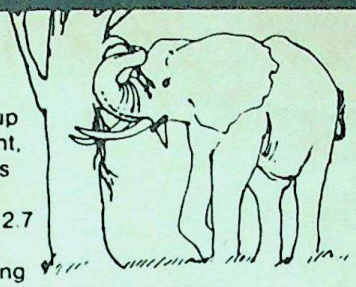
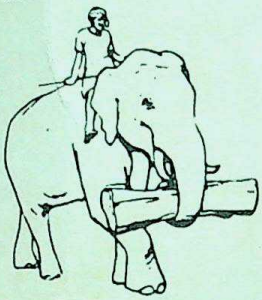
A TRUNKFUL OF FACTS

The elephant is the largest living land animal. The African elephant may reach up to 3.5 metres in height, and weigh as much as 5,500 kg. The Indian elephant is smaller – 2.7 metres tall at the shoulder, and weighing about 5,000 kg.



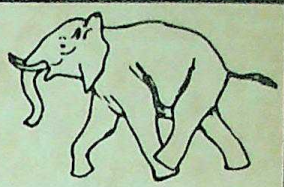


The elephant's most useful limb is its trunk, which may reach 1.8 metres in length, and weigh 140 kg. The trunk is extremely strong, and can even lift a log weighing 275 kg. No wonder . . it has more than 40,000 muscles!

Wild elephants are constantly eating. An adult may eat up to 350 kg of vegetation every day . . . and waste an equal amount in the process. It tears off leaves and branches with its trunk, and slaps them against its body to shake off dust before eating.

They are very thick-skinned creatures. In fact, the skin alone weighs about 950 kg and is about 2.5 cms thick. In spite of this, they are very sensitive to insect bites, and hot and cold weather.

Both bulls and cows have tusks. These may be as long as 3.5 metres in the African bull, and 1.5 metres in the Indian.

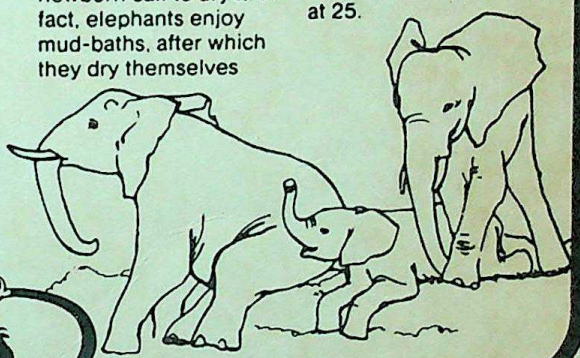


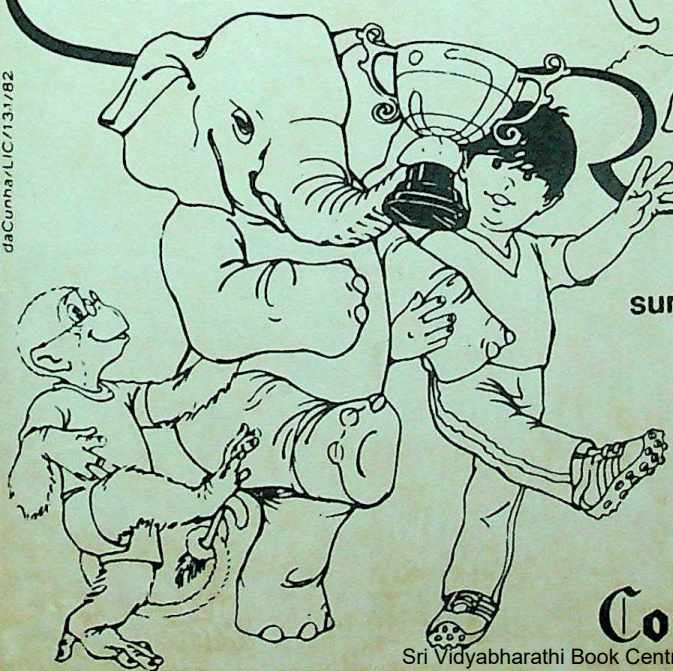
with sand. This keeps their skins smooth and insect-free.

Under normal circumstances, the elephant walks slowly . . . at about 10 km per hour. But when frightened, it can run at about 4 times that speed.

Under good conditions, elephants may live to be 120 years old. They also have long childhoods, reaching maturity only at 25.

When an elephant is born, the mother and other elephants blow dust upon the moist, newborn calf to dry it. In fact, elephants enjoy mud-baths, after which they dry themselves





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